# The Syrian Wars

JOHN D. GRAINGER

MNEMOSYNE SUPPLEMENTS HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

BRILL

The Syrian Wars

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# The Syrian Wars

*By*

John D. Grainger

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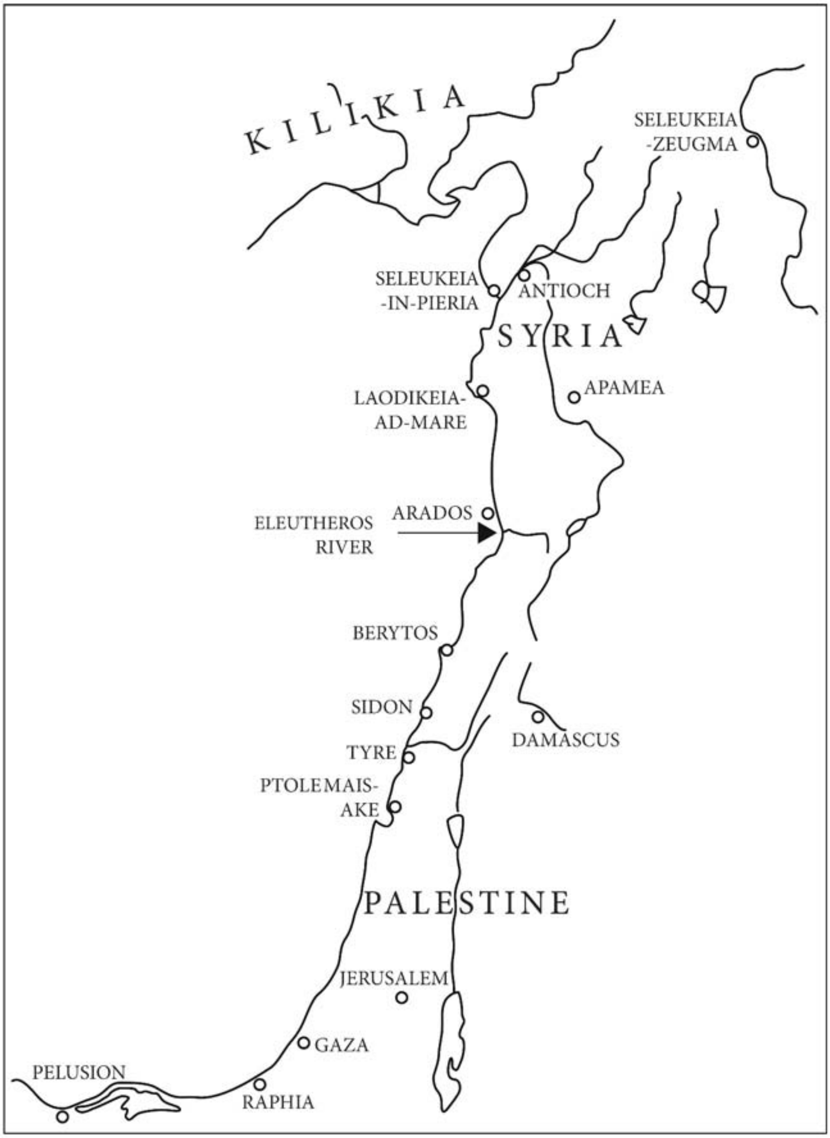
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-IN-PIERIA
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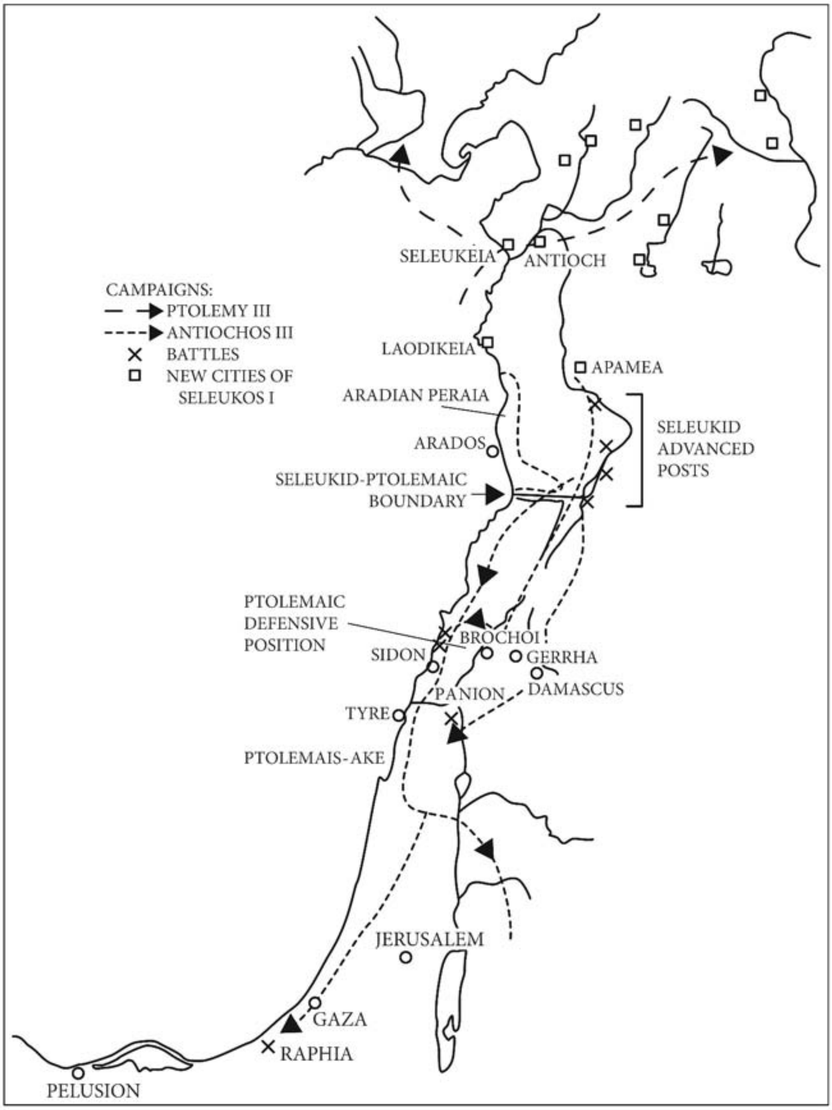
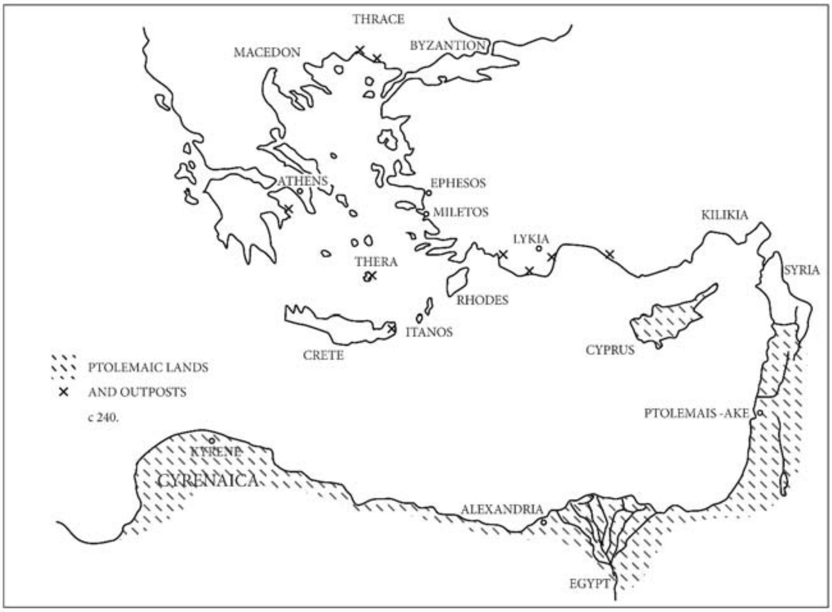
SYRIA
LAODIKEIA-
AD-MARE
APAMEA
ARADOS
ELEUTHEROS
RIVER
BERYTOS
SIDON
TYRE
DAMASCUS
PTOLEMAIS-
AKE
PALESTINE
JERUSALEM
GAZA
PELUSION
RAPHIA

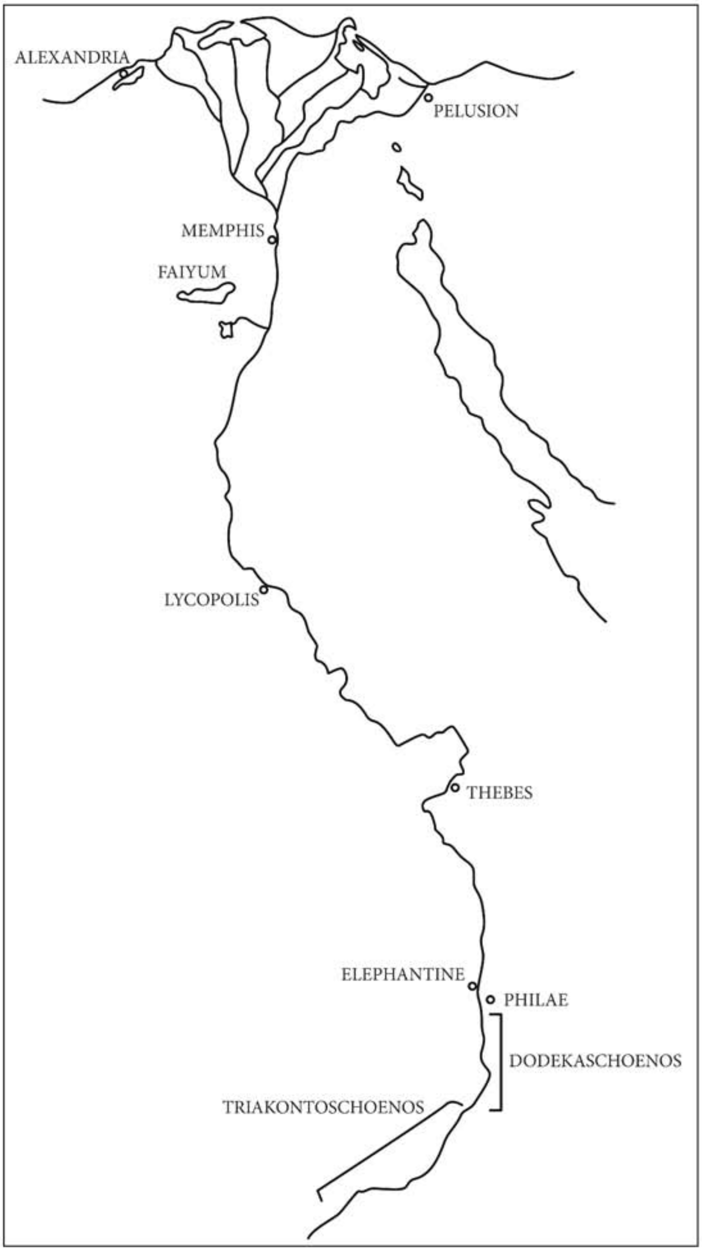
Syria



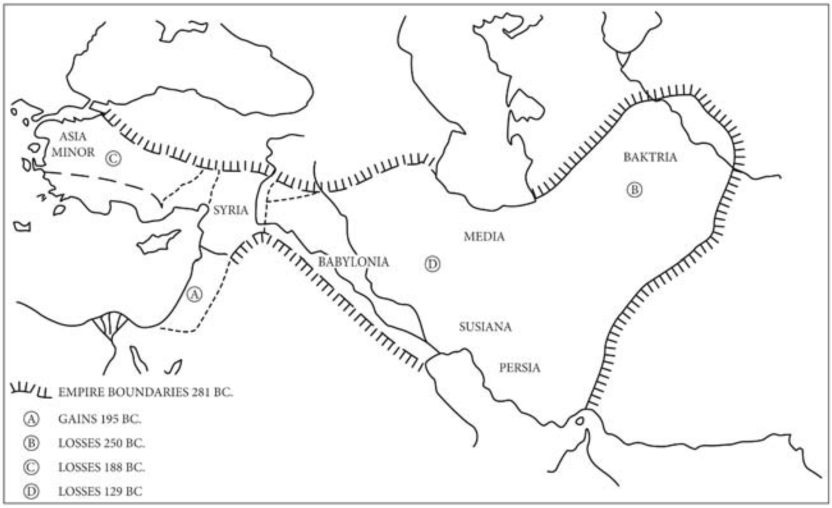

Syria: Strategic Defences



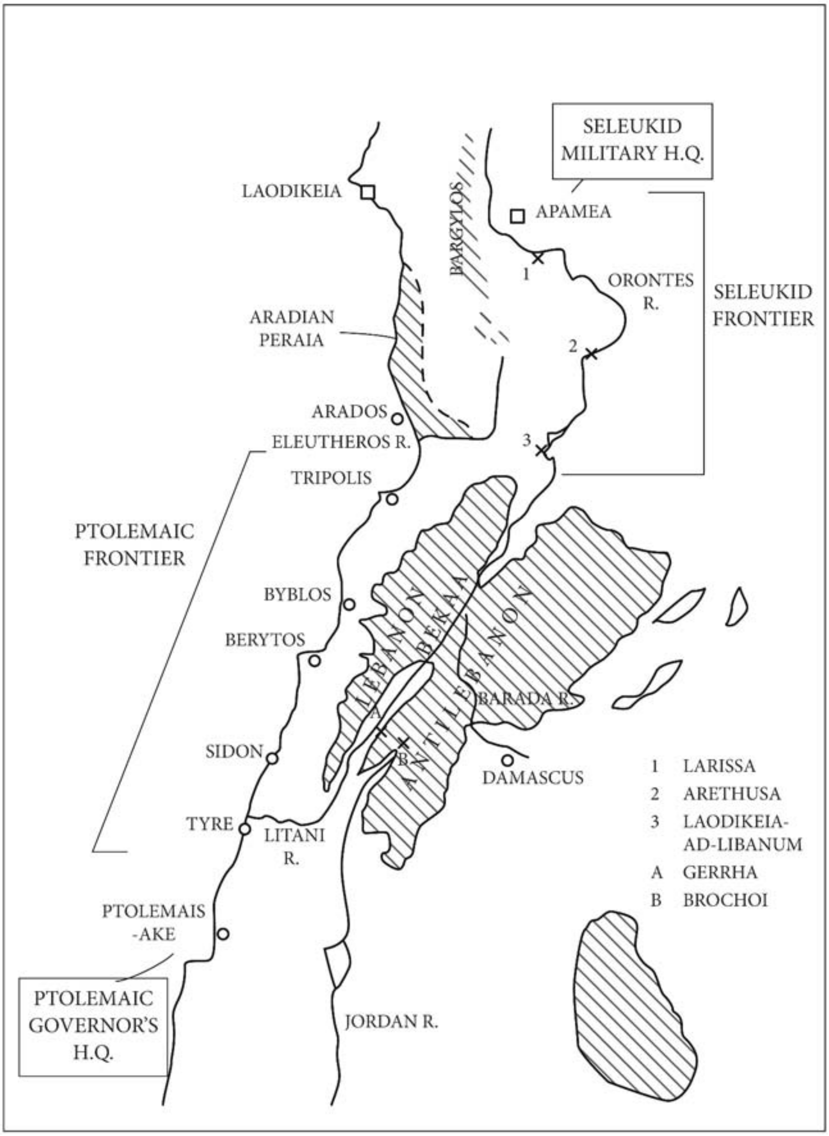

The Eastern Mediterranean


ALEXANDRIA
PELUSION
MEMPHIS
FAIYUM
LYCOPOLIS
THEBES
ELEPHANTINE
PHILAE
DODEKASCHOENOS
TRIAKONTOSCHOENOS

Egypt




The Seleukid Empire




The Syrian Frontier Zone

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| *AfP* | *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*. |
| *AJA* | *American Journal of Archaeology*. |
| Allen, *Attalid Kingdom* | R.E. Allen, *The Attalid Kingdom, a Constitutional History*, Oxford 1983. |
| *ANSMN* | *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes*. |
| App. *Syr*. | Appian, *Syrian Wars*. |
| Arr. | Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*. |
| Arr., *Succ*. | Arrian, *Successors of Alexander*. |
| Austin | M.M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 2006. |
| Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss*. | R.S. Bagnall, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions outside Egypt*, Leiden 1976. |
| BAR | British Archaeological Reports. |
| *BCH* | *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*. |
| Bellinger, 'End' | A.R. Bellinger, 'The End of the Seleucids', *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 1949. |
| *BICS* | *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. |
| *CAH* | *Cambridge Ancient History*. |
| *Chron Eg*. | *Chronique d'Egypte*. |
| *CQ* | *Classical Quarterly*. |
| Curt. | Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander*. |
| Diod. | Diodoros, *History*. |
| *Ep. Anat*. | *Epigraphia Anatolica*. |
| *FGrH* | F. Jacoby (ed.), *Fragmente Greichische Historiker*. |
| Grainger, *Cities* | J.D. Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria*, Oxford 1990. |
| Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia* | J.D. Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, Oxford 1991. |
| Gruen, *Hellenistic World* | E.S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, California 1984. |
| Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* | G.V. Holbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, London 2001. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Houghton, *Seleucid Coins* | H. Houghton, *Seleucid Coins, A Comprehensive Catalogue*, vol. 1, Lancaster PA 2002. |
| *I. Crete* | M. Guarducci (ed.), *Inscriptiones Creticae*, 4 vols, Rome 1935–1950. |
| *I. Didyma* | A. Rehm (ed.), *Die Inschriften Milet*, vol. 3, Berlin 1914. |
| *IG* | *Inscriptiones Graecae.* |
| *I. Ilion* | R. Frisch (ed.), *Die Inschriften von Ilion*, Bonn 1975. |
| *I. Labraunda* | J. Crampa, *Labraunda, Swedish Excavations and Researches*, Lund and Stockholm, 1969–1972. |
| *I. Milet* | Th. Wiegand, *Milet, Ergebnisse des Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen*, Berlin 1914. |
| *I. Stratonikeia* | M.C. Sahin, *Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia*, Rome 1981–1990. |
| Jos. *AJ* | Josephos, *Antiquities of the Jews.* |
| *JHS* | *Journal of Hellenic Studies.* |
| *JJurP* | *Journal of Juristic Papyri.* |
| Ma, *Antiochos III* | J. Ma, *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor*, Oxford 1999. |
| Ogden, *Polygamy* | D. Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death*, London 1999. |
| *OGIS* | *Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae.* |
| *P. Cairo Zen.* | C.C. Edgar (ed.), *Catalogue general des Antiquités épigraphique du Musee de Caire, Zenon Papyri*, 4 vols, Cairo, 1925–1931. |
| *P. Gurob* | J.G. Smyly (ed.), *Greek Papyri from Gurob*, Dublin 1921. |
| *P. Haun* | T. Larsen (ed.), *Papyri Graecae Hauniensis*, Copenhagen 1942. |
| *PSI* | G. Vitelli (ed.), *Pubblicazioni della Societa Italiana per le ricordi dei papyri greci e latini in Egitto*, Florence, from 1912. |
| Pliny, *NH.* | Pliny, *Natural History.* |
| Plut. | Plutarch. |
| *Pros. Ptol.* | W. Peremans and E.van ’t Dack, *Prosopographica Ptolemaica*, Louvain, from 1950. |
| *REG* | *Revue des Etudes Grecques.* |
| *Rev. Num.* | *Revue Numismatique.* |

Sachs and Hunger A.J. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related texts from Babylonia*, 3 vols, Vienna 1988–2002.

Schmitt H. Bengtson (ed.), *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums*, vol. 3, ed. H.H. Schmitt, Munich 1969.

Schurer E. Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. ed. by G. Vermes *et al.*, Edinburgh 1971–1986.

*SEG* *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*.

Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *Samarkhand to Sardis* S.M. Sherwin-White and A. Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis, a New Approach to the Seleucid Empire*, London 1993.

*TAM* *Tituli Asiae Minoris*.

Viesse A.E. Viesse, *Les 'Révoltes Egyptiennes'. Recherches sur les Troubles intérieurs en Egypte du Règne de Ptolémée III à la conquête romaine*, Studia Hellenistica 41, Louvain 2004.

Walbank F.M. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybios*, 3 vols, Oxford 1957–1979.

Welles, *RC* C.B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence of the Hellenistic Period. A Study in Greek Epigraphy*, London 1934.

Will, *Hist. Pol.* E. Will, *Histoire Politique du Monde Hellénistique*, 2nd ed., 2 vols, Nancy, 1979–1982.

*ZAS* *Zeitschrift für Agyptische Sprache*.

*ZPE* *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*.

# INTRODUCTION

Syria in the ancient world was that part of the western half of the Persian Empire which Alexander the Great had to fight hardest to conquer. Even to enter the country it was first necessary to fight the main imperial Persian army under the command of the Great King Dareios III at Issos in 333. Having won this hard battle and driven Dareios off to the east, Alexander marched his army south through Syria with the aim of conquering it and occupying Egypt before moving against Dareios again.[1]

In sequence he occupied, seized, attacked, or conquered a series of cities whose rulers were carefully calculating the odds. At Bambyke, part way towards the Euphrates River crossing at Thapsakos, the priest of the important temple of Atargatis there, Abd-Hadad, seized the opportunity to claim the royal title, issuing coins as a sign of his ambition; this claim did not last long; he was presumably soon suppressed; his coins are few.[2] On the coast the first of the Phoenician cities Alexander reached was the island-city of Arados; he stopped at Marathos, the station of the city on the mainland opposite the island. The son of the king was in command in the city, the king being away with the city's fleet as part of the Persian naval force in the Aegean. The island, lying a kilometre or so off the mainland, was invulnerable to Alexander, who had no ships; the subsequent negotiations were no doubt delicate. After due thought and persuasion, the prince submitted to Alexander, and sent a message to his father to come home.[3] The result was the beginning of the break-up of the Persian naval campaign, and the eventual acquisition by Alexander of a naval force of his own in Levantine waters. This successful diplomacy by Alexander was crucial to any further progress, for to leave a hostile Arados and its ships behind him would be a recipe for strategic disaster.

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1 Arr. 2.7.1–11.10; Curt. 3.8.13–11.27; Diod. 17.32.2–34.9; Justin 11.1–10; Plut., *Alexander*, 20.1–8; Alexander's precise aims are not clear, but Egypt was an obvious target, and occupying it would remove a potential threat to his rear when he moved east.

2 H. Seyrig, 'Le monnayage de Hierapolis de Syrie à l'époque d'Alexandre le Grand', *Rev. Num.* 11, 1971, 3–11.

3 Arr. 2.13.7; we have to assume the message, since the ships soon returned; Curt. 4.1.5–6.

It was while he was camped at Marathos that Alexander received the first serious offer of peace from Dareios, an offer which is reported to have included a suggested partition of the empire between the two kings. He rejected this, though some of his commanders are said to have recommended acceptance. The rejection was made in such terms that it was certain that much more fighting would take place; for Alexander first refused the offered partition, then refused to ransom Dareios' family, whom he had captured at Issos, and finally he laid claim, on the basis of a single won battle, to the whole empire.[4]

Marching south, the army crossed the Eleutheros River, the southern boundary of Arados' *peraia*, its mainland territory. Alexander took the main army along the coast road, but sent his most competent subordinate, Parmenion, inland along a route which led first eastwards along the Eleutheros valley and then south along the Bekaa, the upper valley of the Orontes River between the two mountain ranges of the Lebanon and Antilebanon. Parmenion succeeded in capturing the ancient city of Damascus in its great oasis, along with part of Dareios' war-chest and several important Persians,[5] but Alexander's advance along the coast road in parallel was blocked. The Phoenician cities of Byblos and Sidon both submitted readily enough in the same way as Arados, though at Sidon Alexander had to replace the king with a man who was more amenable; Tyre, however, another city built on an island, refused to surrender.[6]

It may be assumed that this resistance was mounted at least in part by direction of King Dareios. We do not have a detailed account of Persian plans and intentions such as we have in the accounts of Alexander's expedition, and they have to be deduced from events, but Dareios clearly needed time to gather a new army after Issos, and the longer it took Alexander to conquer Syria and Egypt, the better organized Dareios would be. The Tyrian resistance is one of a number of campaigning moves made at this time, all of them aimed, it seems, at isolating and separating and preoccupying the Macedonian forces until Dareios was ready to mount a Persian counterattack from the east.[7] Certainly Tyre

[4] Arr. 2.14.1–9; Curt. 4.1.7–14; Diod. 17.39.1–2.

[5] Curt. 3.13.1–17; Plut., *Alexander*, 24.1–3.

[6] Arr. 2.15.6; Curt. 4.1.15–26.

[7] Other Persian moves included the campaign of the Persian fleet in the Aegean (which was now failing), and several converging attacks westwards through Asia Minor, which were defeated by Antigonos the One-Eyed, satrap of Phrygia. Possibly the transfer

was the ideal place along the Phoenician coast at which to mount resistance. Arados might have been almost as good but it is further from the mainland. Tyre was on an island only a very short distance from the shore, was well fortified, and was clearly well-prepared for the siege which resulted when the city refused to allow Alexander to enter; it had to be taken since a force there could all too easily interrupt Alexander's communications if he moved on past.

But Tyre was defeated and conquered, its buildings burnt, its people massacred and expelled and enslaved. It took Alexander seven months to take the city, and the operation taxed his ingenuity mightily.[8] Once Tyre was taken then he could move on into Palestine. He had already proved his skill at commanding in a set-piece battle, and now he was shown to be a determined and persistent and successful besieger. He was soon tested again, for in Palestine the most important place to capture was Gaza, without whose possession Alexander could not move on into Egypt. It took Alexander another two months to capture the city. When he did so, as at Tyre, he displayed his anger by another massacre.[9] But the way was now open into Egypt.

It had certainly been difficult for the Syrians to predict the result of the fighting in their country. The two cities which resisted strenuously, Tyre and Gaza, were not the only opponents of the Macedonian conquest; during the Tyrian siege the hillmen nearby had made themselves a nuisance and had to be punished.[10] This was a mistake by the hillmen, for campaigning against obstreperous people of the hills was something the Macedonian army was very good at, having had to do it repeatedly at home. Even after the army had passed into Egypt there was trouble at Samaria, where the man Alexander left as governor was murdered.[11] And right at the start Arados had to be coaxed into submission and Bambyke suppressed. Added together these several incidents suggest that the Syrians as a whole were loyal to the Persian king through conviction and choice. Syria therefore had to be systematically conquered;

of a unit of Greek mercenaries under Amyntas to Egypt was also part of these measures. The action of the Aradian king in withdrawing his ships from the fleet began the break-up of the fleet.

[8] Arr. 2.18.1–24.6; Curt. 4.2.1–4.21; Diod. 17.40.2–46.7; Justin 11.10.10–14; Plut., *Alexander*, 24.5–25.3.

[9] Arr. 2.25.4–27.7; Curt. 4.6.7–30; Diod. 17.48.7; Plut., *Alexander*, 25.4–5.

[10] Plut., *Alexander*, 24.10.

[11] Jos. *AJ* 11.325.

presumably any community not recorded as conquered was required to submit formally, and, like Samaria, accept Alexander's authority as king.[12]

The hard fight made by several groups of Syrians was in strong contrast to the relative ease with which Alexander had marched through Asia Minor. Similarly in Egypt, the Persian governor and garrison all surrendered without a fight, despite, or perhaps because of, the example of Gaza.[13] The Persian governor had had to suppress a group of Greek mercenaries commanded by Amyntas who had been in Persian service and had escaped from Issos. Had he and the mercenaries combined they might well have been able to block Alexander's army from entering Egypt. The Persian governor, Mazakes, was significantly weakened by the conflict, and was presumably fully aware that the politically involved part of the Egyptian population was adamantly hostile to Persian rule. Mazakes therefore gracefully submitted, and Alexander was seen as the Egyptians' liberator and greeted with great enthusiasm when he arrived.[14]

Once Alexander moved further east, marching through Syria once more, just one more battle at Gaugamela gave him control over the main part of the Persian Empire as far as Central Asia. So, between landing in Asia and Gaugamela, only in Syria had he found serious opposition from the local population. This Syrian resistance is thus a curious matter. It was not a well-populated country, particularly in the north and inland.[15] The resistance in the country was by no means co-ordinated, which, of course, makes it all the more convincing as a display of loyalty to the Persian king. The several regions of opposition to his conquest also suggests a local political alertness and initiative. The Phoenician cities in particular demonstrated an independence of judgment and decision which boded ill for any future attempts to control them; at the same time there was no sign that they were prepared to work together. The defeat of Tyre was eventually accomplished in large part because of the Phoenician contingents and ships from the other cities which returned from the

---

[12] On may include here the Jews of Jerusalem. There were legendary stories about this period (Jos., *AJ* 11.8.1–6), but little of the truth can be discerned; the most obvious item to be accepted is the formal submission of the High Priest Jaddua (Jos. *AJ* 11.301–302). This would be the minimum which Alexander would expect.

[13] Arr. 3.1.2; Curt. 4.7.2–5; Diod. 17.49.1; Justin 11.11.1.

[14] Arr. 3.1.1–3; cf. Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 9–12 for Alexander's administration, and S.M. Burstein 'Pharaoh Alexander, a Scholarly Myth', *Ancient Society* 22, 1991, 139–145 for a sceptical view.

[15] Grainger, *Cities*, ch. 1.

Aegean. Having deserted from the Persian fleet, they had then perforce participated with some enthusiasm in the fighting, being pleased to gang up on Tyre with the prospect of seeing the destruction of a commercial competitor.[16] These cities were as awkward and independent as any Greek city.

On his marches Alexander had significantly altered both the physical and political geography of Syria. In order to capture Tyre he built a mole to connect the island with the mainland, and this still exists, considerably enlarged by the deposition of sand on either side. As a result Tyre became much more vulnerable to landward attack. By contrast Arados, also on an island, had accepted him at once and so retained both its near-independence and the control of its *peraia*. The destruction of Tyre removed that city from the political game board for the next generation—at least as an independent player—whereas the rival city of Sidon, which had suffered a similar destruction at Persian hands a generation earlier, was now able to recover, partly by receiving Tyrian refugees, and partly by the elimination of its competitor. Gaza, damaged and depopulated, was refounded by bringing in a new population from nearby, and garrisoned by a contingent of Greek troops.[17] The city therefore, seems to have recovered, if only slowly; at any rate, it was a formidable fortress again less than twenty years later; its geographical position as the gateway to Egypt from Syria ensured that it was very likely always to be garrisoned.

Alexander's year-long campaign from Issos to Gaza gave all the Macedonians in his forces a clear view of the geography of Syria. They were familiar enough with mountains and narrow plains in their homeland, but the disposition of these elements in Syria was different; in addition there was a very different coast, and a desert stretching away interminably to the east.

Syria is formed of two mountain ranges which are aligned parallel, north to south, but are discontinuous, together with the lowlands to either side of and between them. Moving inland from the coast, the first range is composed, from north to south, of the Amanus, Bargylos, and Lebanon ranges, south of which the Judaean Hills are much further inland, so leaving a much wider coastal plain. These ranges are divided by rivers which break through from inland to reach the sea—the Orontes,

[16] Arr. 2.20.1–8; ignored by other sources; cf Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, ch. 1.

[17] Curt. 2.28; cf. M.A. Meyer, *History of the City of Gaza from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, Columbia 1907, reprinted New York 1966, a useful summary of available literary information.

the Eleutheros, and the Litani. The parallel range inland is composed of the Kurd Dagh, Antilebanon, and a sequence of high Jordanian plateaux, and these are again divided from one another by rivers and passes. The coastal plain in the north is so narrow that it sometimes vanishes, though in the south it widens out to form the western part of Palestine. Between the ranges is the Great Rift Valley, along which rivers flow—the valley of the Kara Su, the Orontes, the headwaters of the Litani and Barada Rivers—the valley known as the Bekaa—then the valley of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, well below sea level. To the east is the Syrian Desert, which merges seamlessly into the Arabian Desert. To the north the Taurus Mountains mark the boundary of Syria (in a geographical sense), and eastwards from the sea there is a region of steppeland, watered by rivers flowing from or through the Taurus—Euphrates, Balikh, Khabur. This land is called *al-Jazeira* (the frontier) by the Arabs, and Mesopotamia (the land between the rivers) by the Greeks. To the northwest is Kilikia, also lying south of the Taurus, but divided from Syria by the Amanus range; it was another land of cities and mountains which partially followed Syria's lead politically. The southern and eastern boundaries of Syria are the deserts of Syria and Arabia.

The form of the land thus dictates that it is much easier to travel north to south (or vice versa) than east to west, and travel east to west is channelled along the valleys. Approaches to Syria are easiest from the north out of Asia Minor or northeast out of Babylonia and Iran, or from Egypt in the south across Sinai—or, of course, from the sea. These geographical facts mean that politically Syria is, if left to itself, a much divided land. It also means that in military terms it is a land which is eminently defensible; the narrow valleys and awkward mountains can very easily be blocked by fortresses, just as access from outside is blocked by such cities as Gaza.

Yet this relatively easy access also means that the land has rarely been left alone. Alexander's Macedonians were the fourth in a sequence of outside imperial conquerors, following the Assyrians in the eighth century, and the Babylonians and Persians in the sixth, and there had been repeated Egyptian invasions. And yet, as noted, the independent spirit of many of the cities and territories survived.

This is the land which gave its name to the longest sequence of wars in the ancient world. The 'Syrian Wars' lasted two centuries, whereas the much better known 'Punic' Wars between the Roman and Carthaginian Republics from 264 to 146 BC began a generation after the Syrian Wars had begun and ended long before they were concluded; the 'Pelopon-

nesian' Wars between Athens and Sparta lasted less than a century (464–374). But the Syrian Wars originated in 301 BC, or even earlier, and the last one was fought in 103–101 BC, with a final flicker of activity in the 30s. This was the longest sequence of wars in the ancient world.

The land which became the object of this prolonged warfare—a total of about forty years of actual fighting—was to become one of the major sources of wealth and therefore power in the Roman Empire, largely as a result of the effects of this series of wars, despite the destruction which was inevitably involved. The combatants found it necessary to invest a great deal of energy and resources in the country, and it was this process of 'development', as it would now be called, which was the basis of its later wealth. Beyond the Roman Empire, Syria was later to be the political base for the first century of the Arab Caliphate, when Damascus was the centre of the greatest empire yet seen, more extensive even than Rome, or even than Alexander's brief and unsuccessful empire. This period of power and prosperity finally ended with the Mamluk conquest in the thirteenth century AD, when the only way they found to hold the country was to destroy it—just as had the Assyrians two thousand years before.

Alexander's expedition through the country was in a sense the beginning of the Syrian wars, and the land was contested by his successors several times in the next two decades, in a preliminary series of tentative conflicts, before the real conflict began between the dynasties founded by Seleukos and Ptolemy, both of whom were in Alexander's forces during his Syrian conquest. These preliminaries will be discussed in the Prologue, before the origins of the Syrian Wars proper are examined. The wars will then be considered in sequence.

This land is fairly small—750 kilometres from the Taurus Mountains to the Sinai Desert, and rarely more than 100 kilometres from the Mediterranean coast to the Syrian desert—but it is extremely varied. It has swamps and deserts, and ranges in height from the high mountains of Lebanon and the Taurus to the lowest place on earth at the Dead Sea; it has sand deserts, and deserts of black volcanic rocks, and perpetually flowing rivers. As an index of the country's variety it was said that, when Lebanon was the playground of the rich of the Middle East before that country imploded, one could ski on the snows of the Lebanon Mountains and sunbathe on the coast on the same day. When it is carefully tended it is a fertile land. Above all, it was the most commercially enterprising land of the ancient world, thanks to the Phoenicians, to their mariners and merchants, and to their manufactures, notably purple dye and glassware. It has been inhabited and farmed as long as any land on earth, and

to travel through it is to see constantly, near and far, the tells formed of the ruins and remains of ancient towns and cities and villages. At least two of its cities claimed to be the oldest on earth, with some justification.

It was a land which had always attracted invaders, Egyptians and Hittites in the Bronze Age, Aramaeans and Hebrews and Sea Peoples at the end of that Age, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, and then Alexander's Macedonians and Greeks. (This is not a condition which has changed—Turks, British, French and Jews have ruled parts of it in the past century, and it has been invaded by Saudis, Iraqis and Egyptians.) Through all this its native peoples had bowed before each storm, sometimes resisting, mostly enduring, only to rise once more when the storm has passed. Alexander met the same local communities—Phoenicians, Aramaeans, perhaps the Jews, Philistines—as his predecessors. The geography of mountains and valleys encouraged internal divisions, and these various communities never managed more than momentary union, hence permitting the successive conquerors to have their way. Only from outside has Syria ever been united, by Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Arabs, Turks. Syrians themselves have always been divided.

It is curious that where other cycles of conflicts in the ancient world have been repeatedly studied—one thinks of the Persian attempts to conquer Greece, the Romano-Carthaginian wars, the Peloponnesian wars, even the Roman campaigns to conquer Britannia—this Syrian sequence has not, so far as I can find, attracted a study devoted to it. It is the modern approaches to Hellenistic history which have largely precluded such a study. The period is usually taken as a whole ('Alexander to Actium', 'The Hellenistic Age'),[18] so that the Syrian Wars might merit part of a chapter, as in Peter Green's large volume, or the *Cambridge Ancient History* volume;[19] alternatively the period is approached through one of its constituent states, in which case this Syrian Wars are part of the histories of the participants—Seleukids and Ptolemies[20]—but rather overshadowed by surrounding matters such as philosophy and city building, rather easier of research.

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[18] P. Green, *Alexander to Actium, the Hellenistic Age*, London 1990; G. Shipley, *The Greek World after Alexander, 323–30* BC, London 2000. Even worse are the 'Companion' books, which pretend to be comprehensive while omitting large areas.

[19] H. Heinen, 'The Syrian-Egyptian Wars and the New Kingdoms of Asia Minor', *CAH*, VII, 1, ch. 11, covers two centuries of wars in 34 pages.

[20] E.R. Bevan, *History of the Seleucids*, London 1902, reprinted 1966; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*.

The reason for this relative sidelining of what was in fact the central political relationship in the Mediterranean of the period is difficult to discern. Some wars are poorly sourced, of course, and Hellenistic history as a whole is hardly the most popular period to study, thanks to university courses; many books on the period strain for either 'relevance' or comprehensiveness, so that art, philosophy, sculpture, and so on crowd out wars. And there is the modern academic distaste for war, ironically in view of the fact that the modern world itself is the product of wars. Individual kings and rulers—Seleukos I, Antiochos III, Kleopatra—can be studied, often repeatedly and repetitively, in which case only one or two of the wars becomes involved. It is also the case that the study of such a long period (three centuries) and a huge territory (Sicily to India) has necessarily proceeded in fits and starts, so that much basic work has had to be done before wider studies can be made. It seems to me that this stage has now been reached, though no doubt more advances will be made.

These wars were, in fact, wholly central to the period, which cannot by understood if they are ignored or diminished in importance, and they were arguably the main cause for the weakness of the Hellenistic kingdoms when they were faced by the rough-house methods of Rome and Parthia. It is in that spirit, by accepting that they are the essential bases from which the rest of Hellenistic history must be studied, that I present this study of the wars.

PROLOGUE

# SYRIA'S IMPORTANCE REVEALED

Alexander's campaign of conquest in the Persian Empire, for those who took part in it, was a continuing education in strategy, and in no place was this more obviously the case than in the conquest of Syria. To everyone who fought at Issos in November 333 it was clear that Syria could be invaded from Asia Minor, as Alexander then did, and from Mesopotamia, as Dareios had; equally, Syria could be a base for invading Mesopotamia, as Alexander did later (and as the Greek army under Cyrus the Younger had done 70 years before). And if one then wanted to attack Egypt, the sieges of Tyre and Gaza made it agonizingly clear that one had to control Syria first; while, conversely, if one had to defend Egypt, the best preparation was to control at least the southern part of Syria. The two-month delay to Alexander's progress caused by the need to conquer Gaza made the importance of that city all too clear. Again, this had been shown earlier, when the independent pharaohs of the mid-fourth century had held on to Sidon in order to block the Great King's campaigns aimed at the reconquest of Egypt; only when King Artaxerxes III had taken the city (and destroyed it, as Alexander did Tyre) was he able to approach and invade Egypt. Until Alexander marched back to meet Dareios at Gaugamela, there was much recent Syrian history to help Alexander decide on his movements.

At the same time, it will have become clear that this was a lengthy country, much subdivided by geography and society, and as a result it was very difficult to control. The need to fight and negotiate repeatedly along the march from Issos to Egypt emphasized that it was a country whose population could be recalcitrant. The Persian imperial regime had been only moderately successful in controlling it. The previous regimes, the Babylonians and the Assyrians, had been brutal in their conquests precisely because of Syrian recalcitrance. The Persians had been the relatively benign inheritors of these violent conquerors, taking over a wrecked and ruined land; they had imposed peace but had not done much to promote its recovery. It was also a land which wished to be free of foreign rulers, and during Alexander's conquest many preferred the light hand of the Persians to that of the Macedonians and Greeks. Its indigenous powers

were few and weak, but they still hankered after independence. Sidon, Tyre, Gaza, Arados, Hierapolis, Samaria, all manifested this wish in various ways between 360 and 330—and there may have been others we do not know about. It was a land difficult to conquer and unlikely to be easy to hold, unless special policies were instituted. Alexander had shown no aptitude for such policies, relying mainly, like the Babylonians and the Assyrians before him, on force and brutality.

The men who accompanied and survived Alexander and his career of conquest had grown up with him at the court of Philip II, most of them learning the way of things as royal pages. There they had lived in a political atmosphere of intrigue, violence, and exhilarating military and diplomatic success. Most of those who were high in his favour when he died at Babylon in June 323 had fought in his battles and had supported him in the several crises of his reign. They could remember his father Philip, whose achievements had in many ways been just as great as Alexander's, and whose policies and conquests had been the essential bases for Alexander's own career.

Surviving contemporaries of Philip were, by the time of Alexander's death, fairly few, for such men had too often fallen foul of Alexander's political methods, which were as brutal as his military methods. Some had been killed in the fighting, for their lives had been so violent that eventually they were more likely than not to die a violent death. Others had been killed by Alexander for one reason or another, usually on suspicion of plotting against him: so he had killed Parmenion, his father's right hand man. Others again had been left behind, as he had left Antipater to rule Macedon and control Greece, or Antigonos to hold Asia Minor. Both of these men had performed well with extremely limited resources; and they held themselves superior to most of the Macedonians because of their birth, their age, and their victories.

Alexander's contemporaries and companions were, of course, much more numerous, though much less so than at the start of his time. They had watched him fight and manoeuvre his way to victory, both on the battlefield and within his court. They had seen him dominate his massed army when it was on the verge of defiant mutiny, and they had seen him defeated—as Alexander would have put it—by that army in the strike staged in India. Their lives since they became adult had been lived in an atmosphere of tension and danger, whether from battle, or from incompletely conquered enemies, or from the intrigues of the moving and unstable royal court; it was a largely male society they inhabited, for few of those with Alexander were married by the time he returned from India.

In Babylonia, it became apparent that Alexander was intending to make Babylon his imperial centre. They had survived through a year or more of turbulent politics and royal extravagances in spending and emotion; they were compelled to marry women of the Persian aristocracy, an act of royal will which it seems clear they almost invariably hated—only one of them (Seleukos) is said not to have repudiated his Persian wife when Alexander died, or so it was later claimed. Yet in all this difficult time, they did as Alexander insisted, supported him against his mutinous army, worked to prepare for his next campaigns, married the women he ordered them to marry. Many of them must have wished only for rest by this time, and many of them surely knew that yet another campaign, this time around Arabia, so soon after his return from India was a massive evasion of responsibility by the king.

And then Alexander died. No doubt they felt wholly bereft. He had been the emotional and political centre of their world for thirteen years. He had raised them to positions of wealth and power, and now he had, in a final act of irresponsibility, refused the ministrations of his doctor. Without an accepted authority figure to control them, they put into practice those lessons in political behaviour they had learned from Philip and Alexander. Within two years they were fighting each other, and seizing for themselves parts of the empire Alexander had conquered. And Syria was one of the strategically vital places which could give the warrior who held it great power.

Syria's central position did not depend on its inherent wealth and resources; after all, it had been fairly well wrecked by Alexander's campaign, and had been under-populated even when he began. During Alexander's time it had been little more than a way station through which Greek and Macedonian reinforcements were channelled on the way east, controlled by a single satrap for most of that time, with a small garrison.[1] So it was the access into the neighbouring lands which control of the country gave which was its real importance in Alexander's time and in the generation after his death. The land was, in the modern jargon, underdeveloped, except along the coast where the Phoenician cities existed—and two of these had suffered complete destruction during the previous thirty years, Sidon at Persian hands, Tyre at Alexander's. But in three directions there were lands of much greater wealth and population abutting

[1] A.B. Bosworth, 'The Government of Syria under Alexander the Great', *CQ*, N.S. 24, 1974, 46–64.

on Syria. To the north was Asia Minor, which Antigonos the One-Eyed had held for Alexander for ten difficult years;[2] to the east, beyond the Euphrates and the plain of Mesopotamia, was Babylonia, the primary wealth generator of the Persian Empire, a land of economic vigour and great cities, but politically inactive; to the south was Egypt, which had been the most rebellious province of the Persian Empire, and then was ruled in an almost independent way by Kleomenes of Naukratis while Alexander was on campaign. To it, as satrap, had come Ptolemy son of Lagos in the distribution of provinces at Alexander's death; he swiftly removed Kleomenes, and almost as quickly extended his satrapal power westwards over the Greek cities of Cyrenaica.[3] In both of these actions he was probably carrying out policies which Alexander had intended.

Syria was not itself rich or populous enough to be a power source, and it was surrounded by the other lands which were major sources of power—Asia Minor, Egypt, Babylonia. In the distribution of satrapies after Alexander's death it was allocated to Laomedon of Mitylene, whose prominence was largely due to his being one of Alexander's boyhood friends. He had little military power under his control, and the vacuum this left brought in all his neighbours: Ptolemy from Egypt, Antigonos from Asia Minor, and the regent for the kings who were Alexander's heirs, Perdikkas, from Babylonia.

These men had learned their political behaviour and skills in Alexander's and Philip's hard school, which emphasized warfare as the preferred method of action, but had not neglected intrigue. Their strategic education had been as uncompromising as their political experiences, and they were familiar with a wide variety of the native peoples of the empire. None of them missed the vital importance of Syria, and its weakness.

Ptolemy, satrap of Egypt from 323 BC, soon quarrelled with Perdikkas, the regent. Perdikkas had altered one of the last wishes of Alexander by directing that he be buried at Aigai in Macedon, the traditional burial place of the Macedonian kings, rather than at the temple of Ammon at Siwah in Egypt, as Alexander had wished. The man entrusted with constructing the catafalque and taking it from Babylon to Macedon, Arrhidaios, in fact took it to Damascus, where it was collected by Ptolemy, and escorted to Egypt. This is usually portrayed as Ptolemy inter-

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[2] R.A. Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed, Constructing the Hellenistic State*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1990, 36–48.

[3] Diod. 18.19–21; Arr., *Succ.*, 1.16–19; Justin 13.6.20; Marmor Parium B 11.

cepting the coffin and hijacking it; but if it had already reached Damascus, then Arrhidaios had actually been taking it to Egypt. If there was a plot Arrhidaios was a part of it; it is in fact more likely that Arrhidaios was simply interpreting Alexander's assumed wishes. It was not so much Ptolemy's own doing, as the realization of Alexander's wishes by a group of Macedonians of whom Ptolemy and Arrhidaios were only two.[4]

Perdikkas, who was on campaign in Asia Minor, was taken by surprise, which implies that he had no knowledge of the fact that the coffin, which was in fact on a great lumbering wagon which could move only very slowly, had been diverted from its planned route for 300 kilometres south of its intended path even before Ptolemy collected it. There was clearly much more to this event than a mere coffin-hijacking by Ptolemy. Perdikkas' authority had certainly been defied, for he had ordered that the burial take place at Aigai, and he conceived that it was necessary to reassert that authority. He had also, in all likelihood, now lost the opportunity of using the funeral of the king as a cloak for seizing power in Macedon, where Antipater still governed the kingdom, as he had since Alexander set out. Antipater was already apprehensive at the prospect of Perdikkas' arrival. The man Perdikkas blamed was Ptolemy, who had, after all, ended up with the coffin. Ptolemy was also the weakest of Perdikkas' perceived enemies, and was in control of the rich province of Egypt, which was effectively outside Perdikkas' control. He brought the main Macedonian army south from his operations in Kappadokia through Syria and along the Sinai coast road in order to occupy Egypt and remove Ptolemy. The satrap Laomedon apparently took Perdikkas' part—but then he could do nothing else; he does not seem in any way to have affected the moves of either Arrhidaios or Ptolemy within his satrapy.

We can see in this incident the basic problem which the Macedonians as a whole now faced: every man who was in authority acted individually, even independently. Perdikkas' political position was as legal as the Macedonian political system knew, though as a 'system' the whole was extremely personal, with little or no institutional existence. Because of this it was necessary for Perdikkas to extend his authority over every subordinate all the time. None of them was at all inclined to obey unless what Perdikkas said was in accordance with their own interests and

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[4] Alexander's intentions are not in fact clear, even if he expressed any wish at all: Arr. *Succ.*, 1.25 and 24.1; Pausanias 1.6.3; Diod. 18.26–28.

inclinations, or unless he was close by and in overwhelming power. There was little or nothing in the way of a bureaucratic spine to provide a basic administration, and the complete lack of consultative and deliberative machinery meant that such essentially unimportant issues as Alexander's burial place were capable of ending in warfare. The individualism of the satraps, and the fact that they were ruling non-Macedonian—that is, enemy—populations meant that all of them of necessity had troops under their command. Any dispute, unless one of the disputants had overwhelming military power, was therefore liable to end in a fight.

Perdikkas was clearly being defied by Ptolemy and Arrhidaios; but Ptolemy was entitled to feel aggrieved at being attacked. He had loyally carried out the wishes of Alexander by taking his body for burial in Egypt (though it never did reach Siwah), and in his capacity of satrap he had successfully brought Egypt under firmer control (by eliminating Kleomenes of Naukratis), and he had extended the bounds of the Macedonian Empire (by establishing control over Cyrenaica). He was, that is, acting in a conspicuously loyal way. But what he had not taken into account was that the political agenda had changed—unless, of course, he did fully understand this, and had acted as he did over Alexander's funeral wagon in order to provoke Perdikkas. Either way it is most unlikely that he had expected to be attacked by the full Macedonian field army.

Ptolemy had relatively few troops under his command, and no doubt not a few of them will have been unhappy at facing the legally constituted guardian of the kings and their (former and present) comrades in arms. Perdikkas successfully marched his army along the Sinai coast road and reached the eastern part of the Nile Delta, along the distributary of the river which reached the sea at Pelusion. He was thus able to replicate Alexander's crossing of that desert, without having to take Gaza first. It also seems that there was no major fortification blocking his access to the Delta at the Egyptian end of that road. Later the fortress of Pelusion (at Tell el-Farama) repeatedly prevented invaders reaching the Nile, and so forced them to depend on water and food from the desert, or on that which they brought themselves. It is a measure of Ptolemy's unpreparedness for this attack that Perdikkas was able to reach the river and attempt to get his army across without any interference.

It was the time of the Nile flood, and Perdikkas now made the mistake of launching an attack across the river. The force of the current overwhelmed the soldiers' boats. Two thousand of them died by drowning; attacks from crocodiles are also blamed, but this may be a later elabo-

ration. Ptolemy got his men to help in the rescue work,[5] and the result was a revulsion of feeling among all the soldiers against Perdikkas and his policies. Not only had he launched an incompetent attack, he had made war on his comrades, and this had caused casualties which were clearly unnecessary. Riding this emotion, Antigenes, commander of the elite infantry unit, the Argyraspides, and Seleukos, Perdikkas' second-in-command and commander of the cavalry, murdered the regent in his tent.[6] The combination of these two men in performing the deed makes it clear that the whole set of commanders, probably on both sides of the conflict, were involved in the assassination.

This incident went a long way to destroy the prestige of such imperial government as there was. What might have rescued it was the possibility that Ptolemy himself should now become the new regent. He had stood out for implementing Alexander's programme, suitably modified by abandoning, for the moment, the wide-ranging plans which had already been voted down by the soldiers. His opposition to Perdikkas had been popular, both with the officers and the soldiers, and assassination had been the only way to stop Perdikkas' attack.

Ptolemy's obvious capability, as shown by his success in ruling Egypt for the next four decades, suggests that he would have been equally successful on the imperial stage. But he refused the position.[7] No doubt this was in part because a more prestigious candidate in the person of Antipater, a contemporary of Philip II and the man left the rule Macedon by Alexander, was now on his way to Syria. But Antipater, though a man of very great prestige, was about eighty years of age, and had no experience of the empire outside Macedon, except what he saw on his journey to Syria. He accepted the appointment as regent at a meeting of the great men at Triparadeisos in the Syrian Bekaa Valley, and then went immediately back to Macedon.[8] But an empire stretching from Greece to India could not possibly be governed effectively from one corner of it, no matter how important, and no matter how notable the ruler. Antipater's appointment, therefore, effectively meant that the many satraps from

5 Diod. 18.25.6 snd 33.1–36.1; Frontinus, *Stratagems* 4.7.20 and Strabo 17.1.8 add details not necessarily to be accepted.

6 Diod. 18.36.4–5; Arr., *Succ.*, 1.28–29; Plut., *Eum.* 5.7; J.D. Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, London 1991, 22–23.

7 Diod. 18.36–6.

8 Diod. 18.39.1–7; Arr., *Succ.*, 1.34–37; App, *Syr.*, 53; R.M. Errington, 'From Babylon to Triparadeisos', *JHS*, 90, 1970, 44–77; Will, *CAH* VII.1, 37–39.

Asia Minor to Baktria were left to run their own provinces without any supervision at all. Further, Antipater died only a year later, bequeathing the regency to Polyperchon, who was barely competent, and who also stayed in Europe.

Ptolemy clearly took the lesson of the crisis over Alexander's coffin to heart, which was that Egypt was a defensible citadel from which he could defy competitors and enemies. After Perdikkas' attack he concentrated solely on holding Egypt. This was a decision which entailed a further series of necessary policy decisions. He instituted plans to recruit more soldiers, aimed to develop a navy, and he produced policies aimed at conciliating the Egyptian priesthood, who were, or claimed to be, the leaders of native opinion. He developed a cult of Alexander around his preserved body, with priests and priestesses appointed from the highest ranks of the Egyptian Macedonian nobility, and he pushed forward the development of Alexander's city of Alexandria. This had been founded by Alexander personally, and had been partly built by Kleomenes of Naukratis; Ptolemy devoted substantial resources to the city, and it was far enough advanced for him to make it his residence in 313. The centre of the city was the palace, with the tomb of Alexander close by. (So, even if Alexander had wanted to be buried at Siwah, his wishes were still being ignored.) There was a temple for the cult of Alexander, and later temples also for the cult of the Ptolemaic family, and for the invented god Sarapis, an attempt to syncretise Greek and Egyptian cults. A great harbour, part of which was reserved for the navy Ptolemy built, was constructed, and a second harbour developed for commercial use. All this was a skilful amalgam of emphasizing the heritage of Alexander—his tomb, his city—and the careful conciliation of the Egyptian population; at the same time Ptolemy set about attracting able Greeks and Macedonians who would form the bureaucratic and military spine for his body politic.

So the Ptolemaic government of Egypt was conducted under the patronage of Alexander, the divine conqueror, in his city which looks out over the Mediterranean Sea, north towards Greece. Ptolemy's regime therefore in one aspect faced the sea and Greece and Macedon, but at basis it relied on the wealth and productivity of Egypt. The city became officially known as 'Alexandria-by-Egypt', a piece of Macedon beside Egypt, and Egypt itself was referred to as the *chora*, the land of the city, as though only the city was really important. Inside Egypt the government system existing before Ptolemy's arrival became largely staffed by clerks recruited from Greece. It existed essentially to extract a constant supply of tax wealth from the peasantry. Ptolemy by these means developed

his satrapy into an independent kingdom, well-fortified and enormously wealthy, and therefore powerful. The experience of being attacked by Perdikkas was what stimulated him to do all this.[9]

Antipater's death in 319 let loose the contest for power more openly than ever. The continued existence of the kings (Alexander IV, the son of Alexander, a child, and Philip III, a half-wit) compelled all to pretend that they were acting in their names. King Philip was murdered in 317, but Alexander IV survived for perhaps another ten years; neither was ever anything more than a cipher, and Alexander was killed as soon as he neared the age of majority. The strength of Antigonos Monophthalamos, based in Asia Minor, soon became clear, but until the end of 316 he was fully occupied in his contest with Eumenes, the successor of Perdikkas. Both men claimed with some plausibility to have official appointments which gave a legal cloak to their activities.

In 319, perhaps after the death of Antipater, Ptolemy had moved his power forward into the southern part of Syria. The satrap Laomedon of Mitylene, in office since the share-out of the satrapies at Babylon, had been confirmed at Triparadeisos, but he had favoured Perdikkas against Ptolemy. No doubt he objected to Ptolemy's invasion of his satrapy, but he had few troops and no support. He was arrested, then expelled. (He took refuge in Asia Minor with Alketas, Perdikkas' brother, which suggests his political preferences, but that move may actually only be the result of Ptolemy's enmity.) Ptolemy stationed garrisons in the Syrian cities, then withdrew back into Egypt.[10] The cities he took control of are not all specified, but since there were actually no cities in the north of the country, his garrisons were all in Phoenicia and Palestine. Tyre, Joppa and Gaza are known to have been his, as we learn from later events, and so also possibly was Sidon; Arados he ignored, as he always did later.[11]

This was one of several advances Ptolemy made in these years, thereby defining for himself and his successors the defensive posts he considered had to be controlled in order to protect his base, Egypt. Palestine and central Syria, often now called Koile Syria, in part because of the hollow nature of the country between Lebanon and Antilebanon (the Bekaa Valley), was one part of his glacis.

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[9] For Ptolemy I in Egypt see E.G. Turner *CAH* VII.1 119–133; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 14–29; W.R. Ellis, *Ptolemy of Egypt*, London, 1994; these accounts have extensive annotation. For Alexandria, P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols, Oxford 1972.

[10] Diod. 18.43.2.

[11] Discussed by P. Wheatley, 'Ptolemy Soter's Annexation of Syria, 320 BC', *CQ*, 45, 1995, 433–440.

(Koile Syria is a name which was applied at different times to somewhat different regions. At its greatest it covers all the land from Sinai to the Eleutheros River, south of Arados—the eventual Ptolemaic province, in other words. But it can also be used for much smaller areas, for example, the Bekaa Valley between the Lebanon and Antilebanon Mountains, or even Palestine. Here it will be used, I hope consistently, in its most extreme sense, to refer to the Ptolemaic province. It thus included Palestine, the lands east of the Jordan, Damascus, Phoenicia, and the Bekaa Valley. These subsidiary areas, which in the sources might merit the name Koile Syria, will be called by those more restrictive names.[12] The Ptolemaic province itself was referred to in official Ptolemaic documents as 'Syria and Phoenicia', which is ambiguous to modern eyes.)

Ptolemy had already established an indirect control over Cyrenaica, where half a dozen Greek cities were at the time in the throes of revolution and civil war. He intervened by request of the oligarchs in the city of Cyrene, who were losing in their contest with the democracy, which was assisted by a force commanded by Thibron, a Spartan soldier of fortune. Ptolemy's intervention brought the expulsion of Thibron and his mercenaries, and the restoration of the oligarchs to local power, but he also insisted on his own supremacy over the region. He could justify this by referring back to the formal submission the Cyrenaicans had made to Alexander in 331, or by deciding to continue the empire-building. The settlement he reached is recorded in an inscription detailing the constitution of Cyrene.[13] In addition Ptolemy imposed a garrison in the city under the command of a Macedonian officer, Ophellas, who had commanded the army which suppressed Thibron and the democracy. The records we have refer almost exclusively to the city of Cyrene, but it seems clear that Ophellas was, or became, the governor of the whole land. He was virtually independent, a condition he reached by actively recruiting his own soldiers and removing or repatriating those of Ptolemy. He was, however, sensible enough to stay friendly with Ptolemy. Ptolemy had in effect organized Cyrenaica as a new province of the Macedonian Empire, and Ophellas, once in post, manoeuvred into the similar quasi-independence enjoyed by other provincial governors at the time—

[12] R. Bikermann, 'La Coélé Syrie', *Revue Biblique* 54, 1947, 256–268.

[13] *SEG* 9.1 (= Austin 29.); M.A. Laronde, 'Le date du digramma de Ptolémée à Cyrène', *REG* 85, 1972; O. Mørkholm, 'Cyrene and Ptolemy I', *Chiron* 10, 1980, 154–159; on Cyrenaica as a whole at this period cf. M.A. Laronde, *Cyrène et la Libye hellénistique*, Paris 1987.

Ptolemy included. The Cyrenaican cities were left with much local autonomy, but Ptolemy took to himself the post of *strategos* and supreme judge, which was intended to secure his own position, though the local power of Ophellas no doubt largely neutralized it.

By his acquisition of Cyrenaica and Koile Syria, therefore, Ptolemy had erected forward defences for his satrapy, pre-empting any attempt by any enemy to approach Egypt by land. He added one more element to this by contacting the kings of some of the cities of Cyprus. There were a dozen of these cities, ruled by kings with age-long hereditary rights. They had, like the Phoenician cities, been recruited to serve in the Persian fleet, and had then joined Alexander with their ships during the siege of Tyre. A couple of Cypriots had been appointed to satrapies in the east, probably brothers from the ruling house of Soli. The Cypriot rulers and cities were clearly very vulnerable in the new world of huge armies and voracious soldiers. The island was simultaneously rich and weak, so its vulnerability was extreme. Ptolemy's protection, which at first was only a light burden, was thus perhaps welcome; in return he gained access to Cypriot forests and metals, acquired a naval base close to potential enemy shores, and, as with Syria and Cyrenaica, deprived those potential enemies of a possible base.[14] Rather as with Cyrenaica, Ptolemy's initial control of Cyprus was exercised at a distance, and as an ally of the local kings rather than directly, though it was not long before he resorted to full domination.

How deliberate and planned all this expansion was is not clear. There were local reasons for each of Ptolemy's moves, and a case can be made for seeing them all as separate and individual reactions to different local needs and developments. On the other hand, there were fairly recent precedents, before Alexander, for all these moves. For one thing the history of the Persian expeditions against Egypt in the fourth century was surely well enough known; Ptolemy had at least one Egyptian historian, Manetho, at his court, and the final reconquest of Egypt by Persia had taken place within Ptolemy's lifetime, in the 340s, when he was certainly old enough to know what was going on; Cyprus and Cyrenaica had also floated in and out of the Egyptian orbit in the previous century.

The Persian reconquest of Egypt had included preliminary Persian expeditions, one to suppress Cypriot independence, and another to mount a long siege of Sidon; both of these were allied to, or had been

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14 Arr. *Succ.* 10.6.

occupied by, Egyptian troops. When these two advanced posts, particularly Sidon, were taken, Egypt itself fell quickly. Then Alexander's conquest of Syria had seen much the same sequence—Cyprus, Tyre (in place of Sidon), Gaza—then Egypt had been occupied without difficulty, though internal events within Egypt had also assisted. Ptolemy was hardly going to ignore all this recent history, and he had been attacked from Syria by Perdikkas: extending his authority into Syria, Cyprus and Cyrenaica was obviously a deliberate act connected to his need to defend Egypt, even if these moves were individually achieved as the results of local opportunities.

Antigonos Monophthalamos had been appointed '*strategos* over Asia' by Antipater and this was his legal claim to campaign against Eumenes, who claimed to continue the policies and authority of Perdikkas. For a time their war was fought in Syria, but then they moved east until in 316 they fought a complex campaign in the centre of Iran. The eventual victor was Antigonos, and once victorious he used his power to remove satraps who were either too independent for his taste, or too powerful, or had fought in support of Eumenes. Others were appointed or confirmed in office. He thus took to himself the powers of the regent, assuming much the same position as Perdikkas and Antipater, though he operated with a good deal more competence. In particular he chased Seleukos out of his satrapy of Babylonia. Seleukos had been one of the assassins of Perdikkas, and had been made satrap of Babylonia by Antipater. This was one of the plum posts, for the satrapy was probably the richest economic region of the empire. Antigonos demanded that Seleukos present his accounts for inspection. This was another assumption of the royal powers by Antigonos.[15] Seleukos, recognizing this demand for the trap it was, fled to Ptolemy, and explained what Antigonos was doing. Ptolemy now realized that Antigonos' aim was complete imperial control. From Ptolemy's point of view he was Perdikkas resurrected, with increased power and greater ability. He and Seleukos concocted an ultimatum, demanding a reapportionment of the empire, the appointment of new satraps by collective agreement rather than by Antigonos alone, and a share-out of the treasure which Antigonos had collected.[16]

Antigonos' reply to these demands, which he of course rejected, was first to push Ptolemy and his troops out of that part of Syria they had

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[15] Diod. 19.55–56.1; App. *Syr.*, 53; Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, 48–50.

[16] Diod. 19.56.1–57.1; App. *Syr.*, 53; for Antigonos' actions and party, cf. Billows, *Antigonos*.

been occupying for the past three years. Tyre, however, held out, and Antigonos laid siege to it, in a desultory way. He had the same problem Alexander had faced at the beginning of the earlier siege of Tyre. Ptolemy had removed all the warships from the region as he retreated before Antigonos' advance, which on land was overwhelming, so Ptolemy could, therefore, both continue to support Tyre in its resistance and raid Antigonos' shores anywhere from the border of Palestine to the Hellespont.[17]

Alexander had been able to suborn much of the Persian fleet by occupying the Phoenician cities, but Antigonos had to set out to build his own fleet of ships. Since he had control of all the Syrian and Palestinian coastline—he had to storm Joppa and Gaza—he held every port along it except Tyre, and every port was set to work a-building, notably Tripolis, Sidon, and Byblos, and one in Kilikia, the construction being paid for out of the great treasure he had collected in his eastern campaign.[18] He also sent an envoy to Cyprus to persuade as many of the kings in that island as possible to join in him; they would be expected also to build ships. The kings of Salamis, Soli, and Paphos, the main cities of the island, held to their alliance with Ptolemy, but others (Kition—a Phoenician city—Marion, Lapethos, Keryneia, and Amathos) joined Antigonos.[19]

Strategically Ptolemy had made a good fist of a poor position, but he did not have the military strength to face Antigonos in the field, nor the financial strength to compete in the mercenary market. By withdrawing most of his forces to Egypt he concentrated the troops he had; by removing the ships from Syrian ports he forced Antigonos to build his own at great expense in money and time; by holding Tyre he compelled Antigonos to undertake a siege, since Antigonos could not attack him in Egypt while Ptolemy's fleet was able to land a force in his rear if he moved south of Tyre. It was Alexander's dilemma repeated. Antigonos took the point, as he showed by his lack of urgency in fighting the siege, which was little more than a blockade at first. Even if he took Tyre before having a fleet, Ptolemy could simply seize some other city—Sidon or Byblos or Tripolis, or even retake Tyre—and so revive the threat of an attack on his rear. So Antigonos' priority was to construct a fleet large enough to face down that of Ptolemy. At that point Tyre would automatically fall.

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17 Diod. 19.58.2.
18 Diod. 19.58.1–4.
19 Diod. 19.57.4 and 59.1.

The one thing Ptolemy did not do and perhaps should have done was to keep control of Gaza. This city was the key to an invasion of Egypt; it had held up Alexander for two months in 331. Antigonos was able to capture it and its Ptolemaic garrison of mercenaries with considerable ease. Perhaps Ptolemy decided he could seize it back when necessary.

Ptolemy gained a year or more by this strategy. He used it to recruit allies and coordinate their resistance. Kassander was already actively fighting against Antigonos, having sent a force into Asia Minor. Seleukos was given part of Ptolemy's fleet and sent on a cruise round the eastern Mediterranean, resupplying Tyre (presumably), and capturing the occasional coastal city, but above all, relaying his warning of Antigonos' strength, which had roused Ptolemy, to Kassander in Macedon, and to others in Asia Minor. He was eminently successful, so that when Antigonos' fleet was finally ready and he took Tyre, he then had to sail his fleet to the Aegean and take his army into Asia Minor to suppress dissent rather than attacking Ptolemy in Egypt.[20]

Antigonos had made his intentions clear by organizing a meeting of his Macedonian troops as an Assembly, where he was hailed as '*epimeletes*', the title Antipater had used; he was thus claiming the full powers of the regency as they had been held by Perdikkas and Antipater, and therefore claiming legal authority over all the satraps of the empire. In that capacity he issued a proclamation in which he set out his policy towards the cities of Greece: they should have 'freedom', by which he really meant internal autonomy and no more.[21] Ptolemy replied with a similar statement, but when the oligarchs in Cyrene whom he had reinstalled rebelled to gain that freedom, he defeated them and left Ophellas in control as his viceroy.[22] In addition the king of Salamis, Nikokreon, was given authority over the other Cypriot kings, after Seleukos and Ptolemy's brother Menelaos were employed to remove Antigonos' influence from the island.[23] In both these areas, therefore, Ptolemy was being compelled to fasten a tighter grip on the several cities. Ptolemy as a purveyor of freedom was never very convincing. It was a policy, of course, which only the most powerful ruler could implement; Ptolemy could not afford to relax his grip on his forward defences in any way.

[20] Diod. 19.62.5–8.
[21] Diod. 19.61.1–4; Billows, *Antigonos*, 113–114 and 199–200.
[22] Diod. 19.79.1–3.
[23] Diod. 19.79.5.

Tyre finally fell to Antigonos in 314, once he had a fleet large enough to impose a blockade from the sea. But then he used his fleet in the Aegean instead of attacking Ptolemy in Egypt; there was also disaffection among his own followers, provoked by Seleukos, and the dissidents included one of his nephews.[24] Ptolemy was able to recover full control of Cyprus, making Nikokreon of Salamis his viceroy, but then there was a rebellion in Cyrenaica, no doubt provoked by Antigonos, or at least by his policy of freedom, though Ophellas prevailed. A meeting between Antigonos and Ptolemy at Ekregma on the Sinai coast failed to make peace, and Antigonos retired northwards.[25] At about the same time Ptolemy moved into Alexandria, making is his capital. If this was not merely a result of the fact the city was ready to be occupied, this could well have been a major political gesture, a mark of his defiance of Antigonos' pretensions. On the whole it is very likely to have been the latter, for soon after Ptolemy returned to Syria.

He and Seleukos, in joint command, marched the Ptolemaic army and Seleukos' followers and companions to attack Gaza. This city had been the block on Alexander's entry into Egypt; now it was the block on Ptolemy's entry into Syria. It was also the most likely base for any attack by Antigonos on Egypt, which was now all the more probable since the failure of the peace negotiations. It may be that part of Ptolemy's intention was to rectify his mistake in not holding on to the city earlier.[26]

The intention was also, it seems, to attract the attention of Demetrios, Antigonos' son, who had been left in nominal control of Syria, advised by a committee of older Macedonian soldiers. A cunning politician—surely a precise characterization of both Ptolemy and Seleukos—has several purposes in mind in any major action, and here we can discern three or more: defence of Egypt by the capture of Gaza; the possible defeat, or at least the facing down of an Antigonid army; returning Seleukos to Babylon; one might add the encouragement of others of Antigonos' enemies. Ptolemy's intention had always been to reoccupy the southern part of Syria, and to seize control of the main Phoenician cities, which were the source of the sea power with which an enemy could attack Egypt, though it does not seem that this was his immediate aim in this case. Overall the wider aim was to weaken Antigonos, who was too strong to

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[24] Billows, *Antigonos*, 117–124.

[25] Diod. 19.64.8.

[26] J.K. Winnicki, 'Militarexpeditionen von Ptolemaios I und Seleukos I in Syrien in den Jahre 312–311 n. Chr.', *Ancient Society* 20, 1989, 55–92 and 22, 1991, 147–201.

be directly attacked, but whose Syrian forces were now weakened by his absence. It seems unlikely that Ptolemy really wanted to fight a battle. He was rarely willing to do so, always preferring diplomacy and intrigue, and on this occasion he had no clear superiority in manpower and suffered a clear inferiority in war elephants.

One of the primary aims of the expedition was to create an opportunity for Seleukos to ride to Babylonia, which he had to do through Syria. He had a group of loyal supporters with him, and was apparently quite certain that he would be accepted in Babylon if he returned in some strength; no doubt this certainty was a result of secret investigations and intrigues in the past year or so, but it is worth noting that he had with him perhaps a thousand men who had stayed with him since his expulsion. The assumption was that Antigonos' forces in Babylonia were weak and could be defeated fairly easily. For Ptolemy, the outcome of such a return by Seleukos was largely irrelevant for his own purposes; whatever Seleukos achieved, he would at the very least preoccupy Antigonos for a time and distract him from any attempt against Egypt. It was the same intention as his holding onto Tyre: to delay, and if possible prevent, an attack on Egypt. So Ptolemy's main aim in attacking at Gaza was to pin Demetrios' forces in Gaza down by appearing to threaten an invasion of Syria, while Seleukos slipped past. If a victory came, all the better. If no battle happened, nothing would be lost—and Demetrios would not be strong enough or prepared enough to invade Egypt even if he won a battle at Gaza. If the Antigonid forces refused battle that would do just as well. Ptolemy's calculations were that he was in no real danger in Egypt, but the potential benefits were very great. From Seleukos' point of view, the main point was to draw in all the Antigonid forces towards the south so that he would be able to ride past them and then through Syria without danger. The aims of both men were divergent, and would widen constantly from now on.

Demetrios, even though he was only fifteen years old, was already alert and quick. He brought his forces south to confront Ptolemy, accompanied by his advisers. The two armies met some way west of Gaza, perhaps in the region of the later battlefield of Raphia. Ptolemy commanded the larger infantry contingent, some of whom were Egyptians; Demetrios had a formidable corps of elephants, though Ptolemy had none. The armies were thus about equal in strength, and the result depended on generalship and guile. In the event, Demetrios' charisma and his committee of generals were not enough to defeat the wiliness and cunning of Ptolemy and Seleukos. They neutralized Demetrios' ele-

phants by a network of chains which the animals would not walk on, then drove them off by volleys of arrows; the elephants were maddened, their mahouts killed; the animals turned away, wrecking the Antigonid infantry formation behind them. A Ptolemaic cavalry charge completed the rout. Seleukos and his people then slid past the scattered and retreating Antigonid troops and rode hard for Babylon. Ptolemy pursued the defeated army, capturing Gaza city and taking prisoner eight thousand of Demetrios' infantry. In addition to the casualties, which were mainly among Demetrios' cavalry, this capture ensured the effective destruction of Demetrios' army. The prisoners were sent into Egypt, where they were settled on the land, becoming in effect a new garrison and a reinforcement for Ptolemy's own forces.[27]

This battle, which is less regarded and commented on than other, larger, more spectacular fights of this sequence of wars, such as Ipsos and Koroupedion, is in fact the decisive event of the whole series of wars involving Antigonos. The battle in itself did not result in a serious reduction in Antigonos' military strength, though the loss of up to 10,000 soldiers was not to be ignored, but the political results which followed were wide-ranging, and it is these which were the decisive element.

Ptolemy was able to regain control of southern Syria in the immediate result, though this did not last. He moved his troops forward fairly cautiously, occupying the cities once more, while Demetrios retired as far as northern Syria, and spent the winter of 312–311 reviving his military strength, and receiving reinforcements from his father. In the spring he defeated Killes, one of Ptolemy's commanders, somewhere in the north, and Antigonos came to join him with his main army. Ptolemy thereupon prudently pulled out again.[28] Alone he could not hope to fight Antigonos and his main army, or even a substantial fragment of it, and the main purposes of the campaign, to get Seleukos back into Babylon and distract Antigonos, had been achieved. In fact they were more than achieved, for the Antigonid forces had been so concerned to recover Syria that Seleukos had been able to defeat Antigonos' man in the east, recruit his army, and make good preparations to meet Antigonos' attack when it came later in 311.[29] This time, on withdrawing from Syria, Ptolemy defortified the main cities of Palestine—Akko, Joppa, Samaria, and Gaza

[27] Diod. 19.80–86.
[28] Diod. 19.93.1–6.
[29] Grainger, *Seleukos* 77–79; Seleukos captured an army of 17,000 with one of 3,400, having started from Gaza with only a thousand.

are mentioned by Diodoros.[30] This would make it easier to re-occupy the area if he could; if Antigonos chose to rebuild, it would cost him time and money and energy.

Antigonos had already spent a great deal of time marching about in the last year or so without result, and now he had lost control of Babylonia and all the lands to the east. The result from Ptolemy's point of view was wholly satisfactory, for, though he had to give up his brief control of southern Syria, the new Antigonid concentration on Babylonia prevented Antigonos and Demetrios mounting any further action against Egypt. Just as Seleukos' cruise to the Aegean had drawn Antigonos away from Egypt in 314–313, so now his seizure of Babylon distracted Antigonos from Egypt in 311 and after.[31]

Antigonos made peace with his European enemies Kassander and Lysimachos, during 311, and Ptolemy hastily joined in, not wishing to become Antigonos' target. This suited Antigonos full well for he was apparently determined to attack Seleukos. The erstwhile allies thus left Seleukos to face Antigonos alone.[32] They surely realized the danger in this. If Demetrios was successful in his invasion of Babylonia it would then be the turn of the others. Ptolemy was clearly uncomfortable at the situation and restarted hostilities at the latest in 310; it was now his turn to distract Antigonos from Seleukos.

He had used the interval of peace to fasten a firmer grip on Cyprus. When King Nikokreon of Salamis died in 310 he was replaced by Menelaos, Ptolemy's brother; Nikokles, the Paphian king, reacted to this by committing suicide with his whole family, and Ptolemy imposed an even tighter control, securing the final elimination of the Cypriot kings.[33] Ptolemy cruised along the coast of southern Asia Minor in 309–308, repeating Seleukos' cruise of 315–314, and seized a series of cities and ports in Kilikia, Pamphylia, and Lykia, whose possession secured him control of the eastern Mediterranean. He went on into the Aegean, again repeating Seleukos' manoeuvre of 314, where he also established a permanent base at Kos, but failed to hold on to Corinth, Sikyon and Megara in mainland Greece.[34]

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30 Diod. 19.93.7.
31 Diod. 19.100.4.
32 Diod. 19.105.1; *OGIS* 5; Billows, *Antigonos* 131–132.
33 Marmor Parium, *FGrH* 239, B 17; Diod. 2.21.1–3; Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 39–42.
34 Diod. 20.27.1–2.

In this cruise Ptolemy may well have been following in Seleukos' sea-tracks, but his purpose was very different. By his conquests and acquisitions he articulated the empire he and his successors were to hold for the next century. He had clearly decided that holding the three outliers of Syria, Cyrenaica, and Cyprus was not enough to prevent serious threats to Egypt; beyond them he needed further forward defences, whose positioning would enable him to act almost anywhere in the eastern Mediterranean in order to pre-empt or deter an attack. In the short term, of course, he was distracting Antigonos; in the longer term, any other enemy in the future was his target. The series of ports and forts along the Asia Minor coast, plus Cyprus, provided convenient bases for his fleet to reach the Aegean, and access to the raw materials, especially wood, of Asia Minor. But it was the Aegean, gaining access to Greece and Macedon and western Asia Minor, which was his new forward defence. The one part still missing from the strategic plan was Koile Syria. Apart from the directly defensive role it played in his thinking, control of Syria was important because the range of naval galleys was limited. To reach Cyprus from Egypt a galley needed an intermediate port at which to rest the crew and replenish with water. Possession of Cyprus allowed Ptolemy to base his ships there, while the possession of bases along the Asia Minor coast made it possible for his fleet to reach the Aegean in good order. But to lock everything together Ptolemy needed Koile Syria and its port-cities.

Seleukos had not only regained Babylonia, but had seized control of Iran as well. In the process he captured and enlisted Antigonos' whole eastern army, and so Antigonos lost another 20,000 men in addition to those lost at Gaza, while Seleukos now had a respectable force, and a large territory, so that when Demetrios attacked him from Syria in late 311, he could face his attackers with no danger of an attack on his rear out of Iran.[35] He was not included in the peace of 311 between Antigonos and his western enemies, and perforce fought on; one purpose of Ptolemy's seaborne expedition in 309–308 was to distract Antigonos from his war on Seleukos. Ptolemy achieved two things, the set of forward bases between Syria and the Aegean, which were two of Antigonos' areas of power, and the survival of Seleukos in the face of Antigonos' attack.

Seleukos served his ally in the same way as Ptolemy had served him and made a separate peace in 308.[36] He had fought Antigonos' Syrian

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[35] Diod. 19.91.1–92.5.

[36] Polyainos, *Stratagems* IV.9.1; Billows, *Antigonos*, 146–147; Grainger, *Seleukos* 95–100; the date of this treaty is inferred only.

army to a draw, and a boundary was agreed by which they divided Mesopotamia between them; it was marked on both sides by the establishment of a line of fortified settlements. There was a gap, a sort of no-man's-land, between them.[37] Seleukos controlled Dura-Europos on the Euphrates, and Nisibis, and the line of the Khabur River. Antigonos' posts were at Ichnai, Karrhai, and Edessa, and the line of the Balikh River; the two lines were separated by about 150 kilometres of territory; note that all these places were given the names of Macedonian towns, no doubt because they were garrisoned by Macedonian troops. Seleukos then went off to establish his power in Central Asia, which he did successfully, though he was defeated in an attempt to emulate Alexander in India.

Perhaps because Ptolemy was away from Egypt in 310–308, preoccupied with his expedition to Cyprus and into the Aegean, Ophellas, his long-time governor in Cyrenaica, struck out on his own. He formed an alliance with Agathokles, the tyrant of Syracuse, who was at war with Carthage. On the promise of a share of power and lands for his followers, Ophellas marched his army west to assist Agathokles in his invasion of Africa. His army consisted mainly of 10,000 Athenian mercenaries and their families, who suffered badly during the march along the Libyan coast. When Ophellas and Agathokles met, they disagreed, and Ophellas was quickly killed. His army was enlisted into Agathokles' forces.[38]

This left Cyrenaica effectively without a garrison other than the local forces in the cities, and it was not long before the area was once again in rebellion against Ptolemy's rule.[39] This was not actually too serious for Ptolemy, since the Cyrenaicans were not strong enough to threaten his hold on Egypt, and it did not prevent him from actively pursuing his interests elsewhere, but it was awkward nonetheless. One must wonder what Antigonos had to do with all this; he clearly benefited from it, and his involvement may be presumed. The independence of the region lasted for several years; that Ptolemy did little about it suggests both that he was busy elsewhere and that control of Cyrenaica was of relatively little importance to him at this period.

Antigonos sent Demetrios to Greece, where he gained control of Athens, then to Cyprus, where Ptolemy's navy was comprehensively

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[37] Grainger, *Seleukos*, 107–110.
[38] Diod. 20.40–43.
[39] Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 25–26.

defeated in the battle of Salamis.[40] He had already removed the autonomy of the cities of the island, and their kings, and now he lost the island itself. Between 311 and 306, therefore, Ptolemy lost control of all three of his lands outside of Egypt, Koile Syria, Cyrenaica, Cyprus (and he lost his brief possessions in mainland Greece as well). He was no doubt feeling very vulnerable in Egypt by this time. At Cyrenaica Ophellas had taken one army away, and at Cyprus Ptolemy lost two armies and most of his fleet—over 30,000 soldiers and 200 ships in total. And worse was to come. It was now generally known that Alexander IV was dead, and in the wake of Demetrios' victory at Salamis Antigonos had himself proclaimed king, and at once made Demetrios king also.[41] Antigonos and Demetrios followed this by launching a grand attack on Egypt. Antigonos brought his army along the coast road through Syria and Palestine while Demetrios took the fleet southwards parallel to it; part of this fleet had been Ptolemy's until the battle of Salamis. Egypt, however, is a difficult country to attack. Even though Ptolemy's forces had been seriously reduced by his defeats—he had presumably kept an adequate garrison in Egypt during the Salamis war—he was able to prevent Demetrios from establishing his maritime forces onshore, and Antigonos' main army found it very difficult to get through to the Delta, and then ran short of supplies. The very size of the invasion force was one of the causes of the shortages in supplies, and the lateness of the season compounded the problem. In November 306 Antigonos retired, back into Syria.[42]

For Ptolemy the lessons of all this were clear: he could not face Antigonos alone, for his survival had been only by a hair's breadth; he therefore required allies. He also needed to recruit soldiers, and build up a new navy, since Demetrios had been able to reach as far as the Delta without coming under any threat. It was imperative that he gain control of the approaches to Egypt, and this meant, as ever, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, and southern Syria; it also meant fortifications along the coastal route in northern Sinai; it is after this invasion that the development of the fortress at Pelusion is to be expected. The fort was sited several kilometres east of the Delta, and was designed to block the route before an invader could reach the river.

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40 Plut., *Demetrios*, 16–16; Diod 20.46–52; H. Hauben, 'Fleet Strength at the Battle of Salamis (306 BC)', *Chiron* 6, 1976, 1–5.

41 Plut., *Demetrios*, 17.2–18.1; E.S. Gruen, 'The Coronation of the Diadochoi', *The Craft of the Ancient Historian*, ed. J.W. Eadie and J. Ober, Lanham, MO 1985, 253–271; Billows, *Antigonos* 156–158.

42 Diod. 20.73.1–76.7; Plut., *Demetrios*, 19.1–2; Pausanias 1.6.6.

None of this was new, of course, and the fact that several outposts had had to be taken before Egypt itself could be attacked was a justification of his earlier policies. To anyone paying attention it was surely obvious that Ptolemy would make great efforts to recover these territories, and that, after perhaps rebuilding his army and fleet, the re-acquisition of them was his priority.

The defeat of Antigonos and Demetrios in late 306 was the beginning of their fall, but this was well disguised for some time yet. Demetrios soon became entangled in the long siege of Rhodes, which prevented further adventures by him for a year. Ptolemy was thus granted another breather, and he intervened in this siege to render timely assistance to the city, but only sufficiently to prolong the conflict: the longer Demetrios was stuck at Rhodes, the more time Ptolemy would have to recover and build up his strength—and to recruit friends and allies.

Demetrios was eventually defeated at Rhodes, but he rebounded with a campaign in Greece in which it looked for a time as though he might well remove Kassander from Macedon. Once more all the other Macedonian rulers felt themselves to be under real threat. Ptolemy, Seleukos, Kassander, and Lysimachos were now calling themselves kings in competition with, and emulation of, Antigonos and Demetrios, thereby declaring that Alexander's empire was definitively broken, and that Antigonos' pretensions were denied. Their response to Demetrios' invasion of Greece was to form themselves into another military alliance.

This time the war was fought mainly in Asia Minor. Lysimachos invaded from Thrace while Kassander held Demetrios pinned down in Greece. Seleukos marched all the way from the borders of India with a great cavalry force and hundreds of elephants. By 302 these three were closing in on Antigonos in western Asia Minor; he recalled Demetrios from Greece to help him; Kassander could then send more troops to assist Lysimachos. In such circumstances Ptolemy, still much weakened, and geographically remote from the action, was unable to do very much. The rebellion in Cyrenaica rumbled on, his military and naval losses had still not been made good, and without sources of wood he was unable to recover his naval strength. All he could do, once again, was move his forces cautiously into southern Syria.[43]

Ptolemy's political and military weakness is an essential element for understanding his campaign in Syria in 302. While Seleukos, Lysima-

[43] Diod. 20.113.1.

chos, and Kassander fielded armies of tens of thousands of men, Ptolemy could not possibly do the same. Demetrios still disposed of a fleet of hundreds of ships, vastly outnumbering any possible combination of enemy fleets—and only Ptolemy among the allies had a fleet worth counting. Of the five contestants Ptolemy was clearly the weakest in military terms. His main strength lay in the great difficulty any enemy had in penetrating into Egypt, which was in effect his fortified base. This had to be his irreducible territory, which must not be hazarded at all.

His contribution to the joint enterprise was therefore small in terms of manpower. Geographically he was far distant from the scene of the fighting; militarily he was unable to risk his base, and one of his provinces, Cyrenaica, was still in rebellion. So he did what was only to be expected: he sent his army, or part of it at least, to take over the cities of Palestine and Phoenicia. Once again, as in 319 and 312, his occupation of the area was to a degree tentative, and he reached only as far north as Sidon, to which he laid siege;[44] in view of subsequent events it seems unlikely that he was able to take over Tyre either, which Demetrios is later seen to hold. One of Antigonos' armies was operating from northern Syria, whence it mounted a raid as far as Babylon, which Seleukos rightly ignored. It could just as easily have been sent south, and Ptolemy could not afford to lose another army. Given his general weakness, it behoved Ptolemy to be very cautious.

Antigonos floated a rumour—or at least the rumour was spread, and it was mainly in Antigonos' interests—that the allies in Asia Minor had been defeated, and that Antigonos was marching south with his army to deal with Ptolemy. Ptolemy made a truce with the Sidonians for four months and took his army back into Egypt, leaving garrisons in the cities he had taken.[45] This was a different evacuation than when he had razed the city walls. If Antigonos' army really was on the way, it would first of all find the cities held against it—cities whose fortifications Antigonos had repaired since Ptolemy's last withdrawal—and then it would face the problem of invading Egypt, in which enterprise it had already failed once. Ptolemy, that is, was repeating his strategy of 315–314 when his forces held Tyre to prevent Antigonos invading Egypt. The rumour was that the allies were defeated, not destroyed, so if he could hold up Antigonos' forces, his allies' armies, presuming they recovered, could then follow Antigonos into Syria, and Antigonos would be cornered in Palestine.

44 Diod. 20.113.1–2.

45 This follows from the sequel, which was Seleukos' demand that he leave.

Ptolemy's move was clearly carefully considered and strategically intelligent; his contribution to the joint effort was not large, but potentially it was certainly important.

However, the rumour proved to be false. It may have been a distorted report of one of the tactical moves by the allied armies in the campaign in Asia Minor. Ptolemy returned to southern Syria in the early part of 301. The cities were still his, though he was still unable to take either Tyre or Sidon, which were held for Antigonos. So when Antigonos and Demetrios were defeated by the allies at Ipsos in June 301, Ptolemy was already on control of much of central and southern Syria.[46]

Antigonos died in the battle, but Demetrios survived, as did his fleet and part of his army. Seleukos was assigned 'Syria' as his share of the spoils, thereby dividing Antigonos' empire more or less equally with Lysimachos, who took over Asia Minor; Kassander's brother was allocated parts of southern Asia Minor, but Kassander himself was content with Macedon, and the domination of Greece.[47] When he came to occupy his share, however, Seleukos found that Ptolemy had already seized half of it, and was presumably engaged in attempting to capture Tyre and Sidon. We do not in fact know this, but his truce with Sidon had expired, and he was still at war with Demetrios, and Demetrios held those cities for some time longer, so it is very likely that Ptolemy was at the least blockading the two cities. He made it clear that he had absolutely no intention of withdrawing.

Seleukos cannot have been surprised at this. He knew Ptolemy, he had worked with him, and twice he had been with him when he moved into Syria—in 319 and in 312. He must have known what Ptolemy's strategic priorities were, and after the experience of Antigonos' attempted invasion in 306, it will have been clear to anyone with any political sense at all that Ptolemy would seize control of southern Syria if he could. Ptolemy's invasion in 302 was the third time in two decades he had done this; the fact that he took it in 301 was only to be expected, as was his refusal to evacuate the country.

Given that, it was within Seleukos' range of possible responses to accept the situation, and make an agreement with Ptolemy on a mutual division of Syria, and perhaps cooperate in eliminating the last parts of Demetrios' territories—Tyre, Sidon, Cyprus. After all the division agreed

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46 Polybios 67.8; Plut., *Demetrios*, 30.1; App. *Syr.*, 55.

47 Diod. 21.1.5.

after the victory at Ipsos was only between Kassander, Lysimachos, and Seleukos; Ptolemy, though involved in the war, had not been consulted; he was quite justified in seizing some of the spoils.

Seleukos was, of course, disappointed. He made some noises to publicise his claim to the territory Ptolemy had occupied; not surprisingly, Ptolemy did not move. Another of Seleukos' options was that he could have called on his allies, Lysimachos and Kassander, to assist in expelling Ptolemy, but not only were they busy enough themselves, and far away, but they were perfectly happy to see the two men in Syria quarrelling with one another; Seleukos was on his own, not for the first time.

Seleukos did not have the power to challenge Ptolemy directly. If he invaded Syria he would be starting a war of sieges, and Seleukos' military strength was in his cavalry and the elephants, neither of which was much use in a siege. He had no fleet, whereas Ptolemy had one of some size, even if it was not up to Demetrios' standards. And if he and Ptolemy fought, only Demetrios, and possibly Lysimachos, would benefit. Seleukos therefore chose the part of menacing inaction, and this decision was the foundation for the subsequent wars. He announced that Ptolemy was his friend and colleague, and so he would not fight him for what he maintained was his rightful property, wrongly taken from him.[48] This is all very half-hearted, the sort of thing the weaker party in a quarrel will do in the full knowledge that he is in no danger. It did, however, keep the issue in play. No doubt Ptolemy took it as the clear threat it really was. The stage was thus set for a continuing dispute over the political control of Ptolemy's part of Syria: Seleukos' announcement that he would not fight for it was in fact the first shot in the Syrian Wars.

From being a land whose inhabitants had shown a marked partiality for the rule of the Persian king in 331, Syria had now become the helpless victim of two alien kings, whose bases of power lay outside the land. In a sense, of course, this was hardly new, and in geostrategic terms the monarchies based in Egypt and Babylonia in 301 were partial replicas of those of 360—which is to say that, when it was helpless, Syria was naturally the victim of its richer and more powerful neighbours. Since Alexander's passage through the land, when he had put down with considerable brutality all opposition and rebellions, none of the Syrians had made any political moves at all—it was clearly far too dangerous.

[48] Ibid.

But Syria, helpless though its native peoples were, was now a land of major importance. This was clearly due to Ptolemy and his long-term insistence on controlling Egypt's neighbours. It had now been shown that Syria was a vital element in the geostrategic pattern he was constructing. As a result Syria's own helplessness was about to end. Having seized control of their respective sections of Syria, both Seleukos and Ptolemy had to do more than merely control and garrison the country.

There had been signs of this already. The ruined cities—Tyre, Gaza, and earlier Sidon—had been rebuilt; Ptolemy's razing of the city walls of Palestinian cities had been repaired; Antigonos Monophthalamos had begun the construction of his own new capital city at Antigoneia in northern Syria, and there were numbers of new and refounded towns scattered throughout the country based on Macedonian garrisons and the older pre-Alexander towns. But this had been a rather haphazard and unorganised development, constantly interrupted by invasions and military and political crises. Seleukos' decision not to fight for his 'full inheritance', meant that, for the present, there was now no further danger of a great conflict over control of Syria. And, as it happened, this condition lasted for twenty years.

By 301, therefore, Syria had emerged as a useful strategic possession for both Seleukos and Ptolemy, particularly the latter. Equally, because Ptolemy insisted on controlling only half of Syria, he paradoxically ensured that warfare would continue.

## CHAPTER ONE

# SYRIA DIVIDED

Neither Seleukos nor Ptolemy was in any shape to indulge in a war over Syria in 301. In military terms, Seleukos had been the weakest of the three allied kings who had fought in Asia Minor. He had certainly commanded the decisive forces, the elephants and the cavalry, at the final battle, but it was massed infantry, fighting in a phalanx in the Macedonian style, which really counted in contemporary warfare, and in this arm he was deficient compared with both of the others. He was even deficient in infantry compared with Ptolemy, and was wholly without a naval arm.

Seleukos had contributed just 20,000 infantry to the joint army which fought at Ipsos, but the two opposing armies were each up to 80,000 strong. Indeed, Seleukos' infantry force in 301 was no larger than that he had in 311 after taking Babylon and capturing that number of soldiers from Antigonos. Lysimachos' force was the greatest part of the allied army, 44,000 men. Some of these were troops loaned to him by Kassander, which had to be returned after the battle, but he now controlled the lands of Asia Minor from which Antigonos had recruited a good part of the troops on the other side. Kassander had contributed as many infantry to the victory at Ipsos as Seleukos, even while holding back as many men in Greece. That is, both Lysimachos and Kassander had twice as many of the decisive heavy infantrymen as Seleukos.

Ptolemy's force in Syria was probably fairly small. He had commanded 18,000 infantry at Gaza, some of whom were Egyptians who were not employed again, but he had captured 8000 after Gaza and recruited them; he had lost his Cypriot garrison, and up to 10,000 soldiers in the disaster at Salamis. We do not know how many of his soldiers were retained in Egypt, both as an internal security measure (there was still a 'rebellion' going on in Cyrenaica), and as a backup force for Syria, but it is reasonable to suppose that he was stronger in infantry than Seleukos, though substantially weaker in cavalry and elephants. It was also good logistical practice to keep most troops close to the magazines, so in 301 he presumably kept most of these troops in Egypt. He had placed controlling garrisons in the Syrian cities he had seized; with less than 20,000 infantry

(some were undoubtedly lost in the Ipsos battle), Seleukos did not have the military strength to contest Ptolemy's control.[1]

This consideration of military numbers is required because command of a substantial army was the one thing which gave these new kings real power. None of them could claim any hereditary sanction for the orders they gave to other men, except perhaps Kassander, whose father had been Alexander's regent in Macedon from 334 onwards, but even Antipater was of no greater social standing among Macedonians than the others. They were all now working hard to make their kingships real and accepted. Ptolemy performed acts which implied sovereign authority, such as founding cities, commanding armies, settling colonists, building and furnishing temples, and of course collecting taxes. He had been doing all this for twenty years before actually proclaiming his kingly title and undergoing an Egyptian-style coronation as pharaoh.[2] For Egypt, in fact, he was only the latest intruding pharaoh, for there had been a succession of conquerors and usurpers over the period since the expulsion of the Persians in 404, so that there was now no tradition of legitimate kingship by heredity any more.[3] Ptolemy's gestures of respect for the Egyptian religion and the Egyptian temple priests (and no doubt his coronation) had been quite sufficient to gain support from those Egyptians with some local authority, and the acquiescence of the rest. His conspicuous respect for Alexander had assisted in this as well. He had even been able to recruit some thousands of Egyptians into his army and thereby win the battle of Gaza, though he never did it again.

For his real authority, however, he much preferred to rely on imported Greeks and Macedonians. These men had no local ties, and so were totally beholden to him for land and employment. After his first victory in the Salamis war Demetrios discovered that the soldiers of Ptolemy he had captured refused to enlist with him, a most unusual reaction by mercenaries, and a direct contrast with the willingness of Antigonos' soldiers to be recruited by his enemies—the 8000 taken by Ptolemy at Gaza, and

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[1] Sources for numbers: Ipsos: Diod. 20.113.4 and Plut., *Demetrios*, 28.3; Gaza: Diod. 19.80.4; Salamis: Diod. 20.47.1–50.6 and Plut., *Demetrios*, 16.1.

[2] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 27; Turner, *CAH* VII.1, 125–133; the issue of Ptolemy's coronation is disputed, relying on the dating formula for the beginning of his 'reign': cf. E. Grzybek, *Du calendrier macédonien au calendrier ptolémaique*, Basel 1990, opposed by S.M. Burstein, 'Pharaoh Alexander, a Scholarly Myth', *Ancient Society* 22, 1941, 139–145.

[3] Relatives, a son and a cousin, of the last Pharaoh Nekhthorbeb (Nectanebo II) lived on into Ptolemy I's time; one was mayor of a town; neither aimed at the throne: A. Dodson and D. Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, London 2004, 256–257.

the nearly 20,000 captured by Seleukos, for example. These men now owed loyalty to Ptolemy, who could confiscate their possessions—which presumably included the lands they were allocated—if they deserted or betrayed him. Demetrios had them shipped to northern Syria where they would have to be held prisoner, inflicting yet another drain on Antigonos' resources. No doubt some would get back to Egypt on their own.[4]

Ptolemy's generosity with pay and land was well calculated. Not only did it persuade the men who were captured by Demetrios to stay loyal, but it was a useful tool when Egypt was directly faced by invasion later in 306. As Antigonos' army advanced gingerly into the Delta, amid marshes and meandering streams, Ptolemy offered rewards to any of Antigonos' soldiers who defected to him. This appeal was successful enough for Antigonos to station bowmen and slingers and even artillery to drive potential deserters back into his camp; he also inflicted tortures on those he caught. Even so, it is said that a 'large number' succeeded in changing sides.[5]

By the time he reoccupied southern and central Syria in 302–301, therefore, Ptolemy had a small but useful army at his back which was loyal to him (for whatever reason). Seleukos, on the other hand, had had to build up his power and authority in a different way. He was helped, as Ptolemy had been helped, by the expectations of his new subjects. He had built up a good relationship with the Babylonians during his time as satrap there, and was welcomed back in 311—the rule of Antigonos was never really popular, just as his soldiers were never really loyal to him. Seleukos was addressed as king in Babylonia even before his self-proclamation in 305, simply because he was performing kingly duties, at temples, as a judge, commander, and tax collector.[6] Very swiftly he had taken control of Iran, a land which contained the old imperial capitals of Persepolis, Susa, and Ekbatana.[7] He founded a new city, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, an action which could be construed as one reserved for royalty.[8] No doubt also when he campaigned in the east, in Central

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4 Diod. 20.47.4.

5 Diod. 20.75.1–3 and 76.7.

6 Plut., *Demetrios*, 18.2; E.S. Gruen, 'The Coronation of the Diadochoi', *The Craft of the Ancient Historian*, ed. J.W. Eadie and J. Ober, Lanham, MO 1985, 253–271.

7 Diod. 19.92.5; App., *Syr.* 55; Plut., *Demetrios*, 7.2.

8 The precise date of the city's foundation is not known; Seleukos was absent from Babylonia from 307 to 303; between 311 and 307 seems the most likely time: R.A. Hadley, 'The Foundation Date of Seleuceia on the Tigris', *Historia* 27, 1978, 228–230; C. Hopkins, *Topography and Architecture of Seleuceia on the Tigris*, Ann Arbor, MN, 1972; N.H. Waggoner, 'Alexander Coinage at Seleuceia on the Tigris', *ANSMN* 15, 1969, 21–30.

Asia, he was assisted in establishing his power by his wife's origin, for Apama was the daughter of the Sogdian resistance leader Spitamenes. This would hardly assist with the Greeks and Macedonians, but Apama was conspicuous among those who gave gifts to famous Greek shrines and oracles, such as Apollo at Didyma. In both Seleukos and Ptolemy we can see men who were acting a part because it was expected of them, and thus they grew into the role of kings.

Their realms, however, were very different. Seleukos ruled a disparate collection of territories and peoples whose only common feature was their previous subjection to Akhaimenid rule, whereas Ptolemy's satrapy/kingdom was an age-old unitary state; for both of them it was obviously necessary to maintain a large army, even if they did not have a subdued mutual enmity. This was more difficult for Seleukos, for, until his acquisition of northern Syria, he had no direct contact with Greece, which was the source of prime soldiers.[9]

Seleukos' cavalry was recruited mainly in Iran, and, since he and his descendents never had the same quantity of horsemen again as he had at Ipsos, it would seem that they were quickly sent home and were only recruited again in smaller numbers; no doubt many of them were from Baktria, where they were always required to fight or to deter nomad attacks; when Baktria moved into independence in the 250s, they were lost to the central government. Media, however, was a source of horses, the Nisaian breed, and even after the loss of Baktria the Seleukids held this resource. Seleukos' infantry, like that of Ptolemy once he was secure and no longer immediately threatened, was recruited mainly from Greeks and Macedonians, but there simply were not that many in the territories he held in 300 BC, when he came to his confrontation with Ptolemy; his 20,000 infantry at Ipsos included some light troops, so his heavy infantry phalanx was considerably smaller than that. These soldiers were recruited from among the men who were settled in the new lands. They were men who, at least under Seleukos, and perhaps already under Antigonos, were allocated cleruchies, land they held in return for military service. The men were usually domiciled in the cities, living off the produce of their estates—but those estates remained under the eventual control of the king. This was an old colonizing method of both Greeks and Macedonians, but so far the great migration of Greek peoples to the east, which eventually converted all the eastern Mediterranean lands

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[9] For a good survey of Seleukos' kingdom, cf. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *Samarkhand to Sardis*.

into Greek-speaking societies, had not only just begun. The manpower available to Seleukos in 300 consisted of the relatively few migrants who had already settled in the territories he held, and their male children, who were the first generation after the initial hellenic colonization. These, in Syria, were former subjects of Antigonos, and for some time their loyalty to Seleukos could not be relied on. Since in terms of military manpower Seleukos was the weakest of the kings, he had therefore to make a major effort to attract more Greek migrants to his lands, all the time watching both Lysimachos and Ptolemy very carefully. He had, as it turned out, the main resource—land—which would bring in his new subjects.

Ptolemy's manpower problem was as difficult as Seleukos', if in a different way. He had to recruit Greeks into his bureaucracy as well as bringing in settlers who would form his army—Seleukos' kingdom was organized in such a way that many fewer bureaucrats were required. In many ways, of course, these were overlapping categories, but not always. One of the purposes in securing control of Cyrenaica and Cyprus was no doubt to gain access to the Greek manpower of these places, and Cyprus in particular was a useful acquisition in that respect. The contacts he was able to make with the barbarian lands and Greek cities of southern Asia Minor, and the posts he established in the Aegean, were also useful places to act as recruiting agencies. He and his successors were particularly successful in enticing Pamphylians and Pisidians into their service.[10]

The confrontation between Seleukos and Ptolemy was therefore one between two kings who were relatively the weakest, in manpower terms, of those now controlling the lands of the former Persian Empire. Further, their confrontation did not take place in political and military isolation; neither of them could afford to ignore the other kings. Both of them faced a sea in which Demetrios was the great power, and where he held Cyprus and the Syrian cities of Tyre and Sidon; Seleukos was neighbour to Lysimachos, who may or may not have had expansionist ambitions in his direction; and Ptolemy had a continuing problem with Cyrenaica.

Ptolemy had advanced his power in Syria as far north as the Eleutheros River, which became the boundary between the lands of the two kings, and it seems likely that this was Ptolemy's northernmost position even in his earlier occupations. This gave him control of Palestine (including,

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[10] M. Launey, *Recherches sur les Armées hellénistiques*, 2nd ed., 1989.

of course, Gaza), most of Phoenicia, the Bekaa Valley, Damascus, and the southern part of the Eleutheros valley route from the coast to the upper Bekaa. He did not, of course, hold Tyre or Sidon, which were still Demetrios'. These two cities controlled parts of the coastal plain and the road along the coast, together with the slopes of the Lebanon Mountains inland. Along the coast, therefore, Ptolemy's control ended at 'the ladder of Tyre', a choke-point between Akko and Tyre, where there was a steep track across an arm of the Lebanon Mountains which ended in sea-cliffs, a place much decorated by inscriptions left by previous (and later) conquerors. North of Sidon, he held the coast from the site of Berytos to the Eleutheros, including two of the Phoenician cities, Byblos and Tripolis, and their territories.

The Tyre-Sidon territorial block interrupted his control of the coast road and so made control of the Bekaa Valley all the more important, and so also the approach to that valley from the upper Jordan Valley and the Galilee region. The Bekaa Valley, between the Lebanon and Antilebanon ranges, contained the upper waters of four rivers. The Litani rises in the centre of the valley, flows south and then turns through a right angle and breaks through the Lebanon range to reach the sea south of Tyre; close to this turn the Nahr el-Hasbani rises and flows south into Lake Huleh and then the Jordan, thus providing a difficult route between northern Palestine and the Bekaa. The Orontes rises in the north part of the Bekaa, not far from the Litani, and flows northwards, its valley opening out until it links with the Eleutheros valley from the west; the Orontes then flows on north into northern Syria. Between them these three drain the great valley along its whole length. The fourth river is the Barada which rises in the lower Antilebanon and flows south and then east, breaking through that mountain range, and into the desert, where it forms the great oasis of Damascus, the Ghuta. The Bekaa Valley had thus become the vital route linking several parts of the Ptolemaic lands in Syria: Palestine, Damascus, and northern Phoenicia.

Ptolemy had gained control of a useful territory, both as a forward defence for Egypt and as a relatively prosperous region in its own right. The resistance to Alexander's conquest had not been prolonged or repeated after the first campaigns, but it was clearly a less easily controlled country than Egypt, where the Macedonian conquest had been welcomed. This resulted mainly from Syria's geography, for its division by mountains and valleys imposed social and political divisions and ambitions for independence. The Ptolemaic province was a modestly urbanized land, with several towns and a couple of cities—Gaza and Ake—on

the southern coast, half a dozen in Phoenicia, and some market centres in the interior, some of which, like Samaria and Jerusalem, were almost city-sized, though none was of the size or status of Damascus.

In the central region, Phoenicia, the main prizes, Tyre and Sidon, still eluded Ptolemy. Both had been extensively damaged by conquerors in the recent past, but both were now refortified; by his naval strength Demetrios made then invulnerable; they were also dangerous as bases from which he might attack. The cities Ptolemy did hold, Byblos and Tripolis, were fairly minor—Tripolis, in fact, was a relatively recent foundation. There was, so far as can be seen, no serious urban settlement in the Bekaa Valley at this period,[11] which made it a problem since it was fortified cities which were the key to territorial control, and to the defence of the acquired lands.

The boundary of the Ptolemy's lands towards the east is vague, but generally it must be assumed that he controlled all the settled lands as far as the desert edge. It is to be presumed that he occupied Damascus, though this is not attested, and probably he held posts east of the Jordan on the road which ran north-south along the ridge of the eastern edge of the Rift Valley, known as the King's Highway. There were several places here—Abila, Pella, two Gadaras, Gerasa, Rabbat Amana, Hesbon—which show signs of urban life at this time. Gerasa claimed to have been founded by Perdikkas,[12] Pella had acquired, or later acquired, a Macedonian name, and all were on that major route. The Nabataeans of Petra had repelled a raid by Demetrios in 312, and they dominated the desert routes from the south leading to the city. They would hardly subject themselves to Ptolemy, and their lifestyle at this period was largely nomadic; Petra was not yet really an urban place.

The main part of Ptolemy's Koile Syria province was therefore Palestine, with the thinly populated Bekaa as an outlier. This was a land which was fairly well populate. There were urban centres at Gaza and Ake, and the land had not suffered much in the warfare of the previous century, though Gaza, of course, had been destroyed at least once, and armies had marched through the land more than once, with the concomitant damage which is to be expected of such expeditions. Most of the population lived in villages, but they had been in trading contact in the Persian period with the Greeks, judging from the presence of Greek pottery in

[11] L. Marfoe, *Hamid el Loz, Settlement History of the Biqa up to the Iron Age*, Bonn 1998, 14.

[12] C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa, city of the Decapolis*, New Haven, CN, 1938.

many of them. The Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon had controlled many of the coastal towns, and it was through their trade that overseas goods, of which archaeologists find pottery most of all, arrived. It was, of course, normal for even fairly small towns to have walls around them, but how far this could be construed as urbanization is difficult to say; small fortified places might be little more than villages in actual size.

The Judaean Hills, rising to over 1000 metres above sea level, between the well-cultivated coastal lowlands and the great trench of the Jordan Rift Valley, were partly inhabited by the Jews, centred on Jerusalem, one of the fortified towns. Other groups included the Edomites in the south, the Samarians to the north, and the Philistine towns on the coast. The inland areas were much less wealthy than those near the coast, but the mosaic of communities is wholly typical of Syria.

Palestine is a land which inhibits east-west movement, but in which travel between north and south is relatively easy. Ptolemy's control therefore was exercised most absolutely along the coastal area, where the old road from Gaza northwards, the Via Maris, the 'Way of the Sea' to the Jews of the hills, was the main route connecting Egypt with Phoenicia. Two routes led off the road to the east, one from Gaza towards Petra across the northern part of the Negev, the other, much easier, eastwards through the valley of Jezreel to the Jordan Valley south of the Sea of Galilee, where the road linked up with the King's Highway. Minor routes lead into, though not through, the hills, to such places as Hebron, Jerusalem, and Samaria; these in turn were connected by a route which ran along the summits of the Judaean Hills.[13]

Strategically therefore the route from Gaza along the Palestinian coast and into the Bekaa Valley was the primary imperial road which Ptolemy needed to hold if he was to defend Egypt from attack. But he had to go further. The coast was vulnerable to seaborne attack—and Demetrios mounted a raid from Tyre as far as Samaria in 298—so it was necessary to gain control of Tyre and Sidon, to develop the Ptolemaic navy, and to establish a firm grip on the coastal towns and the cities of the Palestinian lowlands; the Judaean Hills were less important, and the Trans-Jordanian area of little strategic account. This was what was needed to face attacks by Demetrios, but by halting his northward advance at the Eleutheros River, Ptolemy had left open the possibility of an attack from the north as well.

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[13] For the condition of Palestine at the end of the Persian period, cf. E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, vol. II, New York 2001, bk. 3, 260–582.

Ptolemy had seized control of the stretch of Syrian territory which was intended to protect Egypt, and in it he was using the existing cities to hold the rest of the country, and in particular to control the great road. He had stopped at the Eleutheros valley, in part because Palestine and Phoenicia were quite enough to block any easy approach to Egypt, but also because north of that valley there were no urban centres on which to base his control. Therefore the region was virtually indefensible, and if necessary it could be dominated from Phoenicia. This was the territory acquired by Seleukos. Its general poverty compared badly with the richer Koile Syria and the even wealthier Asia Minor, and this was one of the reasons Seleukos was angry at the division of the spoils.

Seleukos' southern boundary was the Eleutheros River, dictated by Ptolemy; to the northwest his boundary was the Amanus mountain range which separated Syria from Kilikia, which had been assigned to Pleistarchos, Kassander's brother, along with Karia further west. To the north the Taurus Mountains separated Seleukos' and Pleistarchos' from Lysimachos' territory. Seleukos' section of coast, therefore, and his only means of seaborne contact with the wider Mediterranean world, was only a little over 150 kilometres long, and part of that was under the control of the semi-independent city of Arados. As it happened, this turned out to be quite enough, but its undeveloped and independent condition must have dismayed him at first. Geographically Seleukos' new land had a mountain range close to the coast, and inland much of the land was low hills and a rolling plain, a continuation westwards of the Mesopotamian plain, part of which he had already controlled for several years since the peace with Antigonos in 308. The coast range, the Bargylos (Jebel Alawiye) stretched from the Eleutheros Valley to the Orontes estuary; north of the Orontes its continuation was the Amanus range. The Bargylos was lower and less steep than the Amanus, and it was cultivated to its summit, unlike the Amanus. Its eastern slope was steep, where it dropped down to the Orontes valley, part of the Great Rift Valley which here formed a long trough and was largely occupied by a marsh, the Ghab. The Amanus is steep on both sides, rather higher and steeper than the Bargylos, and is a formidable obstacle to traffic even now. Both ranges, like the Lebanon, intercept the moisture-laden clouds which arrive from the west, and the lands behind (that is, to the east of) the mountains are notably dry in rainfall terms. However, the Seleukid part of Syria is also watered by rivers flowing from the north out of the Taurus Mountains, particularly by the Kara Su, the Afrin, the Quweiq, and the great Euphrates; beyond the Euphrates, the Mesopotamian plain is much

drier, but is also moistened by more rivers from the north, the Balikh, the Khabur (Seleukos' former western boundary), and the powerful Tigris. This is a generally dry land, but it is not a desert, and the absence of mountains facilitates communications. There was an ancient route right across this land.

The gaps in the mountain range formed by the Orontes and Eleutheros Rivers allow rainfall to penetrate through into the eastern area, so that there is sufficient rain to water arable crops and keep the desert at bay. There was a large lake, the Amuq, occupying the area where the Orontes turned west to break through the mountains to the sea and where it was joined by the Kara Su from the north. The Ghab and the Amuq were areas of swamp and seasonal open water, brought about by the geography of the Rift Valley, which was deeper at these places; the Quweiq River also ends in a swamp, the Jabboul 'Lake', without joining another river. Lakes in spring, these areas partly dried out in the summer.[14]

The land behind the Bargylos and Amanus was thus fairly well watered, partly by rainfall, partly by rivers, and this hydraulic regime stretched well inland. This was the territory acquired by Seleukos in 301, less mountainous but less divided than Ptolemy's area, and much less developed in economic and urban terms. In 301 Seleukos' western boundary was advanced by about 300 kilometres westwards to the Syrian coast, into a salient blocked by hostile or potentially hostile territory to both south and north.

The section of Syria acquired by Ptolemy had several cities, and more smaller urban sentiments, but Seleukos' section was almost entirely de-, or un-, urbanized. This had been the region which had borne the brunt of the vicious imperial methods of the Assyrians three and four centuries before, in which the numerous indigenous cities had resisted conquest fiercely and with determination, so that they were repeatedly and systematically captured, sacked, and burned, and their populations massacred and deported. The whole land had been reduced to a rural condition, with virtually no urban centres surviving, and none of the rulers since the conquest—Assyrian, Babylonian, then Persian, now Macedonian—

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[14] For a detailed geography, cf. E. Wirth, *Syrien*, Darmstadt 1972, or E. de Vaumas, 'Montagnes du Proche Orient: L'Amanus et le Djebel Ansarieh, Etudes Morphologiques' *Revue de la Société Géographique d'Egypte*, 30, 1957, 97–235—the 'Djebel Ansarieh' is now called the Jebel Alawiyeh, and in the ancient world was the Bargylos; the British Admiralty Handbooks on *Turkey* (1942) and *Syria* (1943) are useful in dealing with the area before recent developments in such areas as population growth and drainage and irrigation.

had been concerned to encourage urban revival. When Xenophon passed through in 404 with the army of the Persian pretender Cyrus the Younger, he saw no urban centres in the whole area.

There was one important city on the coast, and there were other smaller towns there as well; there was also one city inland, but it was new, and still in the early stages of construction. The Phoenician city of Arados, on its own island a kilometre offshore, controlled a section of the coastal mainland, its *peraia*, where its suburb, Marathos, had hosted Alexander for a time in 332. Arados' *peraia* stretched along the coast for about eighty kilometres, from the mouth of the Eleutheros northwards, and inland along the northern side of the Eleutheros valley for twenty or thirty kilometres; it included also the seaward slopes of the Bargylos. The city was therefore at the junction of the two Hellenistic kingdoms. It had its own king and independent government, neither of whom was enthusiastic about subordination. The king had submitted to Alexander, and the city had been an obedient part of Antigonos' kingdom. Now that Syria was divided between two much weaker kings, and Arados found itself at the boundary, its subordinate status was distinctly loosened, while its possession of a navy made it worth Seleukos' while to conciliate it.[15]

This position obviously caused Seleukos some difficulty. On the one hand Arados and its *peraia* usefully separated his and Ptolemy's territories, so long as it was loyal to him and did not become a route of invasion. The independent-minded nature of the city was a nuisance, and its existence and control of the *peraia* further restricted the stretch of the coastline under his direct control. There was little Seleukos could do about it, however, for he had no fleet, and Arados was on an island. Any pressure on it could well push the city into Ptolemy's arms. Seleukos was thus compelled to tolerate the city's semi-independence. It was a problem which was to bother Seleukid kings for the next two centuries.

The coast north from the Aradian *peraia* was occupied by a number of relatively small towns, all of them minor ports, such as Gabala (which was at times under Aradian control), Tell Sukas, and Ras ibn Hani. Some of these had been long known to Greek merchants and sailors, and one, Poseideion, even had a Greek name. North of the Orontes estuary, the Amanus range reached the sea in cliffs, beyond which was a narrow coastal plain which again held small towns, notably Rhosos and Issos,

[15] J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados et sa Perée*, Paris 1974.

near where the great battle had been fought in 333. This strip of coast and plain was in fact usually reckoned to be part of Kilikia, to which it had easier access than to Syria. There was more than one road over the mountains to the east, but none of them were (or are) easy. Kilikia itself was allocated at the division of the spoils after Ipsos to Pleistarchos, who gained a discontinuous set of lands along the southern coast of Asia Minor. So Seleukos only had direct control of little more than fifty kilometres of the Mediterranean coast.

Seleukos' access to the sea along this short stretch was also very awkward. The Eleutheros Valley, whose southern half was held by Ptolemy and whose northern bank was Aradian, was too easily blocked and so was not available to him as a reliable route. The only other practicable route was along the Orontes Valley, leading from the Amuq plain to a stretch of coast with a narrow plain between the mountains and the sea. The coastal plain held little more than a village.

As a strategic routeway the Orontes Valley was almost as restricted as the Eleutheros. Arados' *peraia* reached to within about fifty kilometres of the river mouth; Pleistarchos' territory came even closer; half a day's sailing from the west was Demetrios' island of Cyprus, one of his naval bases. And the river reached the sea by way of a gorge between the Amanus and Bargylos. This was Seleukos' only reliable contact with the sea, a geographical necessity if his people were to participate in the trade and migrations of the Mediterranean. The more Seleukos looked at what he had acquired the more it will have seemed that he had been cheated.

East of the mountains, however, the situation was rather different. Behind the mountains was a rolling plain, sloping from north to south and relatively well watered by the rivers flowing out of the Taurus. There were three urban centres in the area. At the crossing point of the Euphrates, Thapsakos had been only a village when Xenophon and Cyrus' army passed it a century before,[16] but it was soon to become much more important. Another indigenous town, Bambyke, centred on a famous local temple of Atargatis, also existed. The other urban place was Antigonos' new city, Antigoneia.

In his last years Antigonos had been in residence in northern Syria, supervising the construction of his new city, close to where the Kara Su, the Afrin, and the Orontes meet, and close to the Amuq lake.[17] It had, it seems, been laid out with a lavish hand, and was the only urban

[16] Xenophon, Anabasis 1.4.
[17] Diod. 20.47.5 (the founding).

settlement in Syria outside Phoenicia which could be called a city. But Antigonos had not got very far with the project before being overcome by his many enemies. The city still existed, half built, when Seleukos arrived; it did not last long.

There were, however, a number of other places which were soon to be made cities, as Seleukos took up another of Antigonos' legacies. The whole of this land, from the Taurus Mountains to Gaza, had been under Antigonos' rule for a decade and a half before the battle of Ipsos, and before that it had been for ten years part of Alexander's empire. In those three decades (331–301) it had been governed and controlled essentially by military means. We know of a couple of governors in the early years, but of none under Antigonos, though the land had been garrisoned throughout. In 315–314 Antigonos was present to oversee the siege of Tyre and the great shipbuilding programme, in 312 Demetrios was there, and from 308 onwards Antigonos was in residence: Syria was thus in all probability normally under the direct of control of one or the other of the kings or a member of Antigonos' family. Given the obvious ambition of Ptolemy to control southern Syria, this is not surprising. The few cities were the obvious places in which garrisons had to be placed, though direct evidence exists only for a few: Tyre and Sidon were held against Antigonos and Ptolemy respectively, and both were held against Ptolemy in Demetrios' name after 301. Ptolemy had left garrisons in 'the cities' of the south in 302. A garrison in every other urban centre is to be expected; there were not many, so they would not be a great drain on Antigonos' military manpower.

There were also in existence, when Seleukos and Ptolemy agreed to disagree over control of the country, a number of places which had already been given Greek or Macedonian names, such as Pella, after Macedon's capital, Kyrrhos, Chalkis, and Beroia. These can best be understood as names awarded by their Macedonian garrisons. In particular the fact that the names were largely of Macedonian origin gives the clue, for no Greek would use such names, and no native Syrian would even consider them. It is therefore a fair assumption that these places were where Greeks and/or Macedonians had settled in the thirty years between Alexander and the partition of the country, and where the dominant group was of Macedonian origin. Most of these were pre-existing towns or villages, for there is no point in placing garrisons in deserted lands if the object is to control the country. When Ptolemy and Seleukos divided the land, therefore, each of them found several of these garrison places in his section.

The geographical distribution of these Macedonian names is instructive. Most of those which are known were in the north, in Seleukos' section. They were located to control the communication system, such as it was. Three lay along, or close to, the middle course of the Orontes, at Pella, Larisa, and Arethusa, controlling the route along the ridge east of the river. One, Europos, was at a ferry point over the Euphrates on the site of the former Carchemish, a city long ruined and deserted, one of Assyria's victims; this was just south of the main crossing point of the river at Thapsakos. Between the Euphrates and the coast Beroia and Chalkis were on the Quweiq River, and Kyrrhos on the Afrin, and these were stages on two alternative routes between the coast and the Euphrates. One other place, Doliche, was near the sources of the Afrin and a small tributary of the Euphrates, and was close to the site of a local holy place (just as the Doliche in Macedon lay near such a place).[18]

In Ptolemy's section south of the Eleutheros there were fewer of these Greek and Macedonian place names, and all of them are east of the Jordan River, on the King's Highway along the ridge above the Rift Valley, some of them near to, or above, crossing places of the Jordan. Here there are two certain Macedonian names, Dion and Pella; in addition Gerasa claimed to have been founded by Perdikkas, which is such a curious claim that it may well be true (and therefore between 323 and 321). A town called Hippos, a good Greek word, but one which might be a hellenization of a local name, lay on the east shore of the Sea of Galilee, and the name of Amathos in the Jordan Valley may be Greek, or it may be another Greek version of a local name.

There are no such names west of the Jordan, in Palestine. This cannot be because Antigonos or Ptolemy did not garrison the area; both must have put troops into Gaza, at the very least, while Jerusalem and Ake were both far too strongly fortified to be ignored, and Joppa had to be stormed by Antigonos' troops after Ptolemy's reconquest in 312. The explanation must be that the area was much more densely populated than other parts of Syria, and that the garrisons of Greeks and Macedonians were therefore only small elements of the total population and were unable to impose their language on the places or change their names. On the other hand, the greater density of the population must have made it all the more necessary either to impose garrisons and governors, or to conciliate the local people. This suggests that Antigonos was regarded with some favour

[18] Cf. Grainger, *Cities*, 39–46.

by the local population and that he had reciprocated by imposing only a very light weight of government. The absence of sources makes this, however, only speculative.

The region Ptolemy and Seleukos divided between them in 302–301, therefore, was large, geographically complex, but very differentially developed. Ptolemy had seized that part which at the time was the richest section, which was surely a factor in his action. Seleukos' share, by contrast, was de-urbanized and only thinly populated. It seems unlikely that Ptolemy deliberately chose to seize the rich area; rather, he had seized the south as his defensive shield for Egypt, and it just happened to be the richer part. He would no doubt have seized the area even if it had been as rural and thinly populated as the north. But the more developed south was a bonus, and he could utilize the existing urban defences as his bases. Ptolemy, that is, imposed his control on a land which was already largely settled and organised.

Seleukos' land was not wholly rural: there were several Macedonian settlements dotted about the region, the new city of Antigoneia was half built, and there were some old, partly Greek, places along the coast, and all three had populations which were partly Macedonian and partly Greek. It was, however, effectively unfortified, and if he fell into a war with one of his former colleagues or enemies, Syria would provide an easy route for an invader to penetrate into his other lands. It was a land which was not only unfortified, but it was politically a blank, a *tabula rasa* waiting for the master to write on it.

In the circumstances Seleukos had no choice but to accept the situation contrived by Ptolemy's annexation of Phoenicia and Palestine. Ptolemy complained that the other kings had divided the spoils without reference to him; the story was floated that he had scuttled back to Egypt at the rumour of Antigonos' approach; Seleukos showed his propaganda skill by announcing that Ptolemy as his friend, and refusing to fight him for the lands they both claimed. He also added that it was only those who were victorious on the battlefield who were entitled to the spoils: another useful propaganda point.[19] Behind the hurt and reproachful tone, of course, was a clear threat; Ptolemy was warned, and had to keep up his guard. Seleukos specifically mentioned his claim to his 'lost' lands, and, menacingly, noted that he would consider how he could deal with those who took his rightful lands. By doing so, of course, he set in train the wars which preoccupied their families for the next two centuries.

[19] Diod. 21.1.5.

## CHAPTER TWO

# COLD WAR

Diplomatic manoeuvrings in the years after the battle of Ipsos succeeded in preventing any real fighting between the kings. The incipient hostility between Seleukos and Ptolemy over Syria was overshadowed by the continuing threat to both posed by Demetrios' sea power. The announcement by Seleukos that he would not fight Ptolemy for Syria was rightly taken as a standing threat to do just that when Seleukos felt he had the power, particularly when he added that he would consider how to deal with such matters. Accordingly the next move was for Ptolemy to bolster his position against both Seleukos and Demetrios: he contracted a marriage alliance with Lysimachos in which Ptolemy's daughter Arsinoe (called Arsinoe II, aged sixteen or so; Ptolemy's sister was Arsinoe I) married Lysimachos (who was in his fifties). Lysimachos repudiated his second wife Amestris for the purpose, but kept control of the city of Herakleia Pontike which she had brought to the union.[1] This alliance of the two kings was clearly directed at Seleukos, whose new Syrian territory was now sandwiched between them. It was also, from Lysimachos' point of view, directed at deterring Demetrios, who retained great sea strength and who had held on to several places on the Ionian coast and the Aegean from which he could (and later did) launch attacks into Lysimachos' territories in Asia Minor.

Kassander soon joined this alliance. He was even more seriously threatened by Demetrios than the others, and was seemingly permanently allied with Lysimachos; in addition Kassander's brother Pleistarchos held parts of the southern Asia Minor coast and alliance with Ptolemy and Lysimachos would protect him. With these three joined in alliance, and their two enemies isolated, the obvious riposte was for Seleukos and Demetrios to form their own alliance. No doubt after considerable negotiation, Demetrios sailed to Syria, seized control of Kilikia from Pleistarchos, and met Seleukos at Rhosos, just across the

[1] Plut., *Demetrios*, 31; Memnon 224b–225a

Amanus from the new city of Antioch with which Seleukos was replacing Demetrios' father's city of Antigoneia. At Rhosos the two kings, emulating their enemies, formed an alliance and sealed it with a marriage; Demetrios' daughter Stratonike (another teenage bride) married Seleukos (like Lysimachos, by now in his fifties).[2] Seleukos' first wife, the Baktrian Apama, was presumably now dead, though she had been politically active in patronizing the Apollo temple at Didyma the year before; and Didyma is close to Miletos, one of the places Demetrios held.[3] In this alliance the greater power was that of Demetrios, whose fleet, with its bases in Greece, Cyprus, Tyre and Sidon, and now Kilikia, totally dominated the eastern Mediterranean. Seleukos might have control of the northern Syrian coast, and, somewhat tentatively, of the Phoenician city of Arados, but he had no fleet to speak of, and he could not field a land army capable of tackling either Lysimachos or Ptolemy, and certainly not both. The two alliances balanced each other quite neatly.

Yet this balance was clearly unstable. All the rulers involved had internal troubles or urgent tasks close to home. It goes without saying also that loyalty to an ally was very much secondary to the interests and priorities of each individual king; Lysimachos' treatment of Amestris was a clear sign that marriages were fragile bases for political alliances. Lysimachos found it difficult to establish his control along the north coast of Anatolia, where new kingdoms in Bithynia and Pontos were emerging, and he had continuing difficulties in Thrace, including a brief war with Demetrios;[4] Ptolemy, now free of the greater war, was at last able to face down the 'rebellion' in Cyrenaica. He put his stepbrother Magas into Cyrene as his governor. This was a sensible means of conciliating the local cities, whose citizens clearly did not like his direct control;[5] the problem, of course, was that the Cyrenaicans may be conciliated but independence of Ptolemy was something which attracted Magas as well, and, as it turned out, he was not unwilling to move with his subjects in that direction. Kassander was in bad health, and he always had troubles on Macedon's northern frontier.

Intruding into the whole system in the eastern Mediterranean was Agathokles, the Syracusan tyrant-king, who had filched Ophellas and his

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[2] Plut., *Demetrios*, 32.

[3] *OGIS* 213 (= *I. Didyma* II, 479 and 480); Apama may have been still alive, but the absence of any mention of her in accounts of the alliance does suggest she had died recently.

[4] Plut., *Demetrios*, 31; Pausanias 1.10.2.

[5] Pausanias 1.6.8.

army from Ptolemy's control, but who was also at some point married to Theoxene, another of Ptolemy's daughters.[6] Agathokles had gained control of the island of Corcyra, where he was challenged by Kassander, who was Ptolemy's ally also.[7] How far all these developments were encouraged by Ptolemy with the aim of keeping a balance between his allies is not clear, but it was certainly confusing. It was cross purposes and particular interests such as that which meant that the whole alliance system was liable to break down at any time; such intrusions as that of Agathokles might do it; in the event it was the death of Kassander in 297 which provided the blow which brought down the whole edifice.

Seleukos' alliance with Demetrios and his marriage with Demetrios' daughter Stratonike were obviously reactions to the threat to both men posed by the rival Ptolemy-Lysimachos-Kassander alliance, but it also had an importance for Seleukos in his own internal affairs. The land he had taken over was garrisoned and to some extent settled by Greeks and Macedonians who had been subjects of Antigonos and Demetrios for the previous 15 years, perhaps more. They may have felt a loyalty to the family. This was not an emotion many felt, it must be said, at least in regard to Antigonos, but it was an issue which Seleukos had to consider, and Demetrios was a much more attractive figure than either Antigonos or Seleukos, particularly to soldiers. The alliance with Demetrios will have helped defuse any of this lingering loyalty among former Antigonid supporters who were now in Seleukos' territory.

This, however, was only one of a number of measures Seleukos took to increase his control of Syria. His basic problem was that the lands he had acquired were effectively defenceless. He could not hope to challenge Ptolemy's theft of the south (as he described it) unless his own section was developed and fortified and so rendered defensible, and unless he himself could wield an army—and perhaps also a fleet—big enough to fight Ptolemy's army and capture his fortified cities.

The policy he adopted is an indication of his imagination and his ambition. He established four great cities in the land north of the new Ptolemaic frontier, and promoted half a dozen other towns to *poleis* in the region to the east, between the cities and the Euphrates.[8] Two of

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[6] Justin 23.3.6; Theoxene's parentage is not wholly certain: she may be Ptolemy's stepdaughter; H.J.W. Tillyard, *Agathocles*, Cambridge 1903, 212, thought so.

[7] Diod. 20.105.2–3.

[8] For all this on the Syrian cities see Grainger, *Cities*.

the great cities, Seleukeia-in-Pieria and Laodikeia-ad-Mare, were placed so as to provide developed and fortified ports for secure access to the commerce of the Mediterranean; the two other great cities were inland, also well fortified, at Antioch and Apameia.

Seleukeia was placed just to the north of the mouth of the Orontes, with an artificial harbour basin large enough to hold a small fleet, and with its acropolis high on a nearby hill; these two parts were connected by city walls of the latest design. The main city was located down by the harbour; high above was a temple in the revived Doric style, and an area which became the royal necropolis. This ensemble indicates that this was intended to be the main city of the region, even of the kingdom. Seleukos had already founded a city of the same size at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, which was in some way intended as a rival to Alexandria-by-Egypt; this new Seleukeia was another. Its importance was signalled by a variety of factors: it was named for the king himself, it was intended as the base for the new Seleukid fleet, and the summit of the acropolis, with its revived-Doric style temple, was intended as the burial place of the kings of the dynasty. That it was on the coast and close to the main river of northern Syria was a reminder of the similar situation of Alexandria, and it guarded the easiest entry to inland Syria, so permitting reliable supplies from inland and by sea to reach the city. Laodikeia, to the south but still outside the mainland territory of Arados, also had a large harbour, and city walls of notable strength, but its acropolis was less forbidding that of Seleukeia. Its position was less strategically vital, but it defined the southern limit of the directly ruled part of the coast. Its hinterland was smaller, in that it did not have good communications with the inland areas of the kingdom, though its control of the seaward slopes of the Bargylos range was a source of wealth, for it developed into a major and highly regarded producer of wine.

The two cities he founded on the coast were clearly intended to provide Seleukos with secure maritime access and to establish his full control over his meagre stretch of coastline. In that regard they were the most important of his foundations. The two inland cities were situated with regard to their seaward neighbours and to the route system of inland Syria. Antioch was on the Orontes 'behind' Seleukeia, in the rich and productive Amuq basin, laid out beside the river, and again with its acropolis sited on a hill high above the main city, and the two sections were connected by long walls. It replaced the defunct Antigoneia which had been built a little to the east and which was now dismantled; its site was incorporated into Antioch's territory as a sub-section of the

city, a symbolic posthumous defeat for Antigonos which gave some indication, perhaps, of Seleukos' feelings. Antioch was laid out as a large city, about the same size as Seleukeia-in-Pieria, and with its separate-but-connected acropolis, it was similarly designed to be under royal control.

Apameia was placed at, and engulfed, one of the old Antigonid towns, which had been called Pella. It was sited on the eastern ridge of the Rift Valley, overlooking the Ghab marsh to the west and the course of the Orontes to the south. It was situated north of the Eleutheros gap between the Lebanon and Bargylos ranges, and thus dominated both that route towards the coast and the route north along the ridge top, and it also looked south along the Orontes valley towards Ptolemy's lands. It was laid out on a stretch of level ground above the plain, with the acropolis to one side (where the present town of Qalat al-Mundiq is, and which was perhaps the site of the erstwhile Pella). It became the main military base of the dynasty in the region, a standing defence against Ptolemaic attack, and a standing menace of a Seleukid invasion of the Ptolemaic lands to the south. At the same time it was sufficiently far behind the front line that a good warning of any Ptolemaic invasion could be received before it was attacked, so that the army could be mobilised.

The four cities, all much of a size, and each with a semi-detached acropolis, were located so as to establish Seleukos' political control of the land, and at the same time to secure his military control of it, and to establish a proper defence of that land. His scheme has some resemblance to that which he and Antigonos arranged in Mesopotamia in their peace agreement in 309 or 308. He left a region between Laodikeia and Apameia and the Ptolemaic boundary as another no-man's-land, though in this case it was partly occupied by military posts and by the Aradian *peraia*. Arados thus found itself as a frontier city, whereas it had no doubt thought of itself as a metropolis. The no-man's-land was partly a defensive measure, and partly an early warning of any attack. As we will see, it was particularly successful in the latter role.

These four cities were all founded within a year or so of Seleukos' acquisition of northern Syria, at much the same time that the diplomatic alliances were being negotiated, that is, in 301–300. The decision was obviously made in the light of the dispute with Ptolemy over control of the south. The heavy fortifications of all four cities were clearly defensive in intention, and they are a good indication that Seleukos was not confident that Ptolemy was satisfied with that part of Syria which he had already seized. For the present, with Demetrios and his

fleet still in control of Cyprus and the two Phoenician cities—and of Kilikia after 298—Ptolemy could not risk an attack northwards. Seleukos therefore had a period of time in which to establish his defensive system.

These four cities were all named for Seleukos' immediate family: himself, his wife (Apama), and his parents (Antiochos, Laodike). This was a powerful political statement of his determination to hold this new territory (which became known, semi-formally, as the 'Seleukis'), but it was also perhaps a sign of his claim to be the effective heir of Alexander. He had conquered the eastern lands which Alexander had conquered, he had invaded India, he held the old imperial capitals of Persepolis, Susa, Ekbatana, and Babylon. Now, with the foundation of the four great cities in Syria, each of which could rival Alexandria-by-Egypt in size, he was in effect laying claim to the whole empire of Alexander. And by eliminating and physically destroying Antigoneia he was effectively consigning the attempt by Antigonos to do the same to the historical dustbin. This was all despite his alliance with Antigonos' son Demetrios, and his marriage to Demetrios' daughter.

Establishing his grip on the coastward section of northern Syria was obviously Seleukos' priority and the four great cities did that. They will have taken years to build—Alexandria was only ready to be occupied by Ptolemy twenty years after its foundation—but the very fact of the announcement that the four existed would be a statement of Seleukos' intent and determination. He then supplemented these four great cities in the west by organizing a group of several more cities in the eastern part of Syria, in the rolling plains between Antioch and the Euphrates and the Taurus mountains and the Syrian desert. He used the places which in recent years had acquired Macedonian names—Doliche, Kyrrhos, Beroia, Chalkis, Europos. These names were retained, and other local towns were given new, Greek, names. The crossing of the Euphrates at Thapsakos was refounded as a city, officially called Seleukeia, but popularly referred to simply as 'Zeugma'—'The Bridge'—to distinguish it from the other cities of the same name. A little to the south Bambyke, with its locally important shrine to Atargatis, was organized as a Macedonian city with the appropriate name of Hierapolis—'holy city'. Along the course of the Orontes south of Apameia, the towns of Arethusa and Larissa became fortified outposts in advance of the main base at Apameia, and another was developed at Laodikeia-ad-Libanum, whose dynastic name implies that it was a new foundation. These three places, spread evenly along the Orontes and close to the Ptolemaic frontier on the Eleutheros, clearly had

a military purpose; they established Seleukos' political control over the river valley and acted as early warning stations in the event of a Ptolemaic invasion.

The development and hellenization of Bambyke is one sign of the new relations between the incoming Greeks and the already resident Macedonians on the one hand, the native Syrians on another, and the new king. From the description by Lucian much later it seems clear that the shrine was largely unaffected by Greek influence,[9] but its inclusion within a Hellenic *polis* will certainly have had some effect. It was an attempt by Seleukos to domesticate a shrine which might have considerable religious, and therefore political, influence among the native Syrian population.[10] Doliche was also founded close to a Syrian shrine of the local thunder god, and in the Roman period this became a favourite of some of the Roman soldiers as Jupiter Dolichenos. The name Doliche was presumably awarded because the Macedonian Doliche also had a similar shrine to Zeus.[11] It was normal, of course, as in Egypt, for the incomers to respect and adopt local shrines and gods as a means both of conciliating the resident population and of ensuring their own good fortune.

These new cities were already inhabited by Syrians as well as having Macedonian names. At Beroia, which had been the city of Halab in the earlier Iron Age (and is now Aleppo), the plan of the city still shows the existence of the original Syrian village on the tell within the pattern of the rectilinear streets of the Greek city.[12] Zeugma, of course, enclosed Thapsakos, and in general it seems reasonable to conclude that every new city will have included a pre-existing village within its walls. The cities were, of course, planted at significant places, whether on routes or near good agricultural land, and this is exactly where villages and local towns would already exist. This circumstance would necessarily mean the inclusion of Syrians in the cities' populations. For a long time, perhaps always, the Syrians—meaning speakers of Aramaic or Phoenician—outnumbered the Greeks and Macedonians in northern Syria. It was clearly part of Seleukos' task, as it had been Ptolemy's, to deal with the existing inhabitants in such a way that they accepted his rule and authority.

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9 Lucian, *De Dea Syra*.
10 G. Goossens, *Hiérapolis de Syrie*, Louvain 1943.
11 F. Cumont, 'Doliché et le Zeus Dolichenos', *Etudes Syriennes*, Paris 1917, 173–202.
12 J. Sauvaget, *Alep*, Paris 1941, ch. 4; Grainger, *Cities*, 79.

The success of this policy in Syria can only be judged by the absence of recorded trouble—unlike in Egypt, where Ptolemy's successors faced intermittent opposition from native Egyptians. It cannot, however, be said that any sources for relations between Seleukos and his family and the Syrians actually exist, but one aspect must be the heavy immigration of Greek-speakers in the century after Seleukos' acquisition of northern Syria; this immigration, into a land which was fairly thinly populated in the first place, resulted in the northern Syrian population being probably majority Greek-speaking by the time of the Roman Empire. But this was a patchy development, and some regions remained largely Aramaic-speaking. At the same time it is not always sensible to equate language with politics. The city of Arados exhibited distinct disaffection at times, so often in fact that it is best seen as a settled aim of the citizens to become fully independent, and it retained its local language for some time. It became a Greek-speaking city, probably fairly quickly, yet it continued to work for independence.[13] In Babylonia Seleukos' similar policy of conciliation is rather clearer in the sources, and is not masked by the heavy Greek immigration. He and his successors played the part of the traditional patrons of the Babylonian temples, they employed Babylonians in (fairly junior) official capacities, their decrees were issued in Babylonian cuneiform, their regime encouraged—and taxed—Babylonian economic enterprise.[14] Babylonia was the prime economic centre of the whole kingdom, and its taxed wealth was the foundation for the riches of the kings, as it had been that of their Akhaimenid predecessors—and as the taxes of Egypt were the basis for the wealth of the Ptolemies.

Seleukos had considerable success in conciliating Babylonians and Syrians, but less so in Iran. Several sections in the north of Iran had broken away into independence during the Macedonian civil wars following Alexander's death. Armenia and northern Media became separate kingdoms under dynasties founded by former Akhaimenid satraps, Orontes and Atropates respectively. Persis, the original homeland of the former imperial people, and of the Akhaimenid family, had been handled very carefully even by Alexander, whose satrap Peukestas spoke Persian and adopted Persian dress. The land seems to have been less than happy at Seleukos' rule, and it was another area, like Arados, which hankered after independence. He held Susiana to the west of Persis firmly, with a garrison in Susa, but further east, in Karmania and Gedrosia, evidence of his

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[13] Grainger, *Cities*, ch. 7, and *Hellenistic Phoenicia*.

[14] Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *Samarkhand to Sardis*, 149–161.

rule is minimal, no doubt partly because easy access was blocked by Persis.[15] The effect of Seleukid rule, following the neglect of the region by Antigonos, was to break Iran into fragments, some subordinate, some independent. No doubt Seleukos would have preferred all to be part of his empire, but the least bad alternative for him was that the land be divided.

Seleukos clearly had a difficult task in his relations with the native populations. They formed distinct and separate populations—Iranians, Babylonians, Syrians, and others—in distinct and separate geographical locations, and they had little in common with each other except their former membership of the Akhamenid Empire and their present subjection to Seleukos. Their individuality as peoples was generally expressed partly by their distinctive languages, but mainly by their attachment to particular gods, goddesses, shrines and temples. By favouring these manifestations and institutions Seleukos and his successors certainly by and large conciliated many of the local non-Greek communities, but they did not inspire enthusiastic loyalty; indeed, by so favouring the local deities they were in fact helping to emphasize their continuing separateness. This might be seen as a 'divide-and-rule' policy, though there is no other evidence that Seleukos consciously adopted it; more likely it was a policy which was originally adopted as a short-term measure, to avoid a problem such as rebellion, and one which then became settled imperial policy because it existed and was by then the easiest way out.

Seleukos was rather more concerned with his Greek and Macedonian subjects. These were his own people, and, more cynically, they would form the personnel of the armies he needed. Conciliating Syrians and Babylonians and Iranians was a policy aimed at reducing the risk of rebellion and disaffection; it was thus essentially a negative, leave-alone approach. But, if he was to withstand external pressure, from Ptolemy, or Demetrios, or Lysimachos, it was essential that he increase his armed power. Partly this was accomplished by founding the new fortified cities in northern Syria, but those cities needed to be inhabited, and inhabited above all by Greeks and Macedonians trained to arms. Over the next decades there was a large-scale migration of people from various parts of Greece into Syria, so that by the end of Seleukos' reign, in 281, they were functioning cities, though it is likely that the migration went on for some time longer, and perhaps never stopped. Another migration, of

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15 Ibid, 74–79.

course, was of Syrians from the surrounding country into the new cities; later there was a considerable Jewish community there, particularly in Antioch.

This is not something, it must be said, which is recorded in any of the extant sources. It has to be deduced from the fact that the cities did not exist before Seleukos acquired northern Syria, but did exist in the third century BC, and were clearly populated by Greek speakers, so a substantial migration is the only way this could have come about. The absence from the sources of a record of their growth and building means that the process has been generally ignored by later historians. Much attention has gone to investigating the colonization movements from Greece to the west in the eighth and seventh centuries, but the movement to Syria during the third century was probably on a much greater scale, and was certainly more rapid and more concentrated, than that earlier movement. It was taking place also at the same time as a considerable movement of population into Asia Minor, where several cities were founded or refounded, and others grew; and while another substantial migration into Egypt took place, attracted by Ptolemy's generosity and requirements. Most of this migration probably took place in the first half of the third century, and the numbers involved must have been in the hundreds of thousands. The two monarchies which contested control of Syria so repeatedly during that century were able to field armies of 70,000 men each by 217; in 312 Ptolemy had fielded an army for the Gaza campaign of less than 20,000 men, of whom a quarter or more were Egyptian. To expand the number of military-age men—mainly Greek, at that—so greatly in only two generations argues a very substantial immigration indeed.

The development of the Syrian cities was repeated also in a group of cities in Western Iran, and by an equivalent and substantial development in Baktria. Both of these required a substantial migration of Greek-speaking people, the construction of cities, and much expenditure of time, effort, and money by the king. It was also inevitably a rather slower process than in the lands which were nearer to the sources of the migration. The cities in Syria were apparently functional by about 280—a construction time of two decades, very similar to that of Alexandria-by-Egypt—but they were clearly vulnerable for some time after their foundation; and the increase in Seleukos' armed forces was thus also only gradual. In such circumstances, it was diplomacy and intrigue which had to serve as the primary protection for Seleukos' fragile kingdom, as Seleukos showed by his quick announcement that he would not fight his

'friend' Ptolemy. The mere announcement of the existence of the new cities will have had some effect, and in the minds of many, they will have had to be taken into account from the start, even before much construction had taken place, but such legerdemain would only go so far.

The brief balance of alliances around the eastern Mediterranean was upset in 297–296 by the death of King Kassander and the subsequent problem of the Macedonian royal succession. The successors of Kassander were his three sons, who were dominated by his widow Thessalonike; the combination proved incapable of maintaining their rule of the kingdom. The long-drawn-out crisis which resulted eventually saw Demetrios becoming king in Macedon and in retaining control of Athens, the first time these two great Greek powerhouses had been under such unitary control.[16] This concentration of power stimulated immediate and widespread opposition: in the Greek cities, from the Aitolian League, from Pyrrhos of Epiros, from Lysimachos, from Seleukos, from Ptolemy. These three latter kings coincidentally, and presumably in concert, moved to eliminate any traces of Demetrios' authority from their neighbourhoods.

Seleukos had already broken with Demetrios. He is said to have asked him for Tyre and Sidon and Kilikia, and had been refused, no doubt with some indignation.[17] This may have been seen by Seleukos as a dowry for his new wife Stratonike, but Demetrios was not going to give up such important places. This dispute, if it happened, had taken place in about 298, and at the time Demetrios, in a brief visit to the east, had conducted a raid into Ptolemy's part of Syria, as far as Samaria.[18] Ptolemy was unable to do much about this at the time, and it was only a foray, not an attempt at conquest, but it forcibly reminded both him and Seleukos of the length of Demetrios' reach, and the utility, to Demetrios, of the Phoenician cities he held. Demetrios' visit to Rhosos in the same year had also no doubt emphasized anew to Seleukos how vulnerable his part of Syria was; no wonder Seleukos wanted all these lands. (He claimed Tyre and Sidon anyway as spoils from the defeat of Antigonos.) The request and the refusal will have meant a distinct cooling of the Seleukos-Demetrios alliance.

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16 E. Will, *CAH* VII.1, 104–105.

17 Plut., *Demetrios*, 35–36.

18 Eusebius, *Chronographia* II. 119, redated by G. Corradi, *Studi Ellenistici*, Turin 1929, 40, n. 3.

When Demetrios became deeply embroiled in Macedon and Greece in 295/294 Seleukos seized Kilikia; at the same time Ptolemy attacked Cyprus, and Lysimachos mopped up some of the Ionian cities Demetrios had held.[19] Seleukos, without the power to do more, also symbolically detached himself even further from Demetrios by divorcing Stratonike. But she was too valuable a dynastic item to be returned insultingly to her father; instead she was at once married off to Seleukos' eldest son, Antiochos, and the pair went off to rule Seleukos' territories in the east. It was reported as a love match,[20] though it was, of course, primarily a political move. Just as Stratonike's first marriage, to Seleukos, was a political gesture, marking the alliance with Demetrios, so her removal to the east was another, indicating the end of that alliance.

It is worth taking note of the cleverness of Seleukos in all this. He may have divorced Stratonike, but by at once marrying her to his son, with a cover story of a love match, which implies that her well-being was paramount, he defused any anger Demetrios might vent. Perhaps of more immediate concern, it also helped to remove any resentment any residual Antigonid loyalists in Syria might feel. At the same time he placed his son, a capable man, as king in his own kingdom. Antiochos, of course, was half-Baktrian. By appointing him as joint-king Seleukos avoided the sort of generational conflict in the royal house which had already destroyed Kassander's inheritance, and was to destroy the houses of Lysimachos and Agathokles, and come close to doing the same in Egypt. The number of issues Seleukos dealt with by this episode is a striking testimony to his political skill and deftness.

Ptolemy had to fight hard for Cyprus. Demetrios had placed his family in Salamis, presumably for safety, during his Greek adventure. They were released when Ptolemy captured them with the city and sent to Demetrios in Macedon, but Ptolemy had certainly inflicted a serious humiliation on the new king of Macedon without applying the distracting balm which Seleukos deployed. No doubt Ptolemy was, however, quite satisfied. He had now recovered the three peripheral regions he had been aiming to control for the past twenty years and more. And, of more immediate importance, Ptolemy and Seleukos between them had greatly reduced the threat of Demetrios' power in the Levant, even though he still held Tyre and Sidon.

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[19] Plut., *Demetrios*, 35–36; K. Broderson, 'Der Liebeskranke Königssohn und die Seleukidische Herrshaftsauffassung', *Athenaeum* NS 63, 1985, 459–469.

[20] Plut., *Demetrios*, 38; App., *Syr.* 59–61.

As Macedonian king, and presumably stimulated by these thefts, Demetrios set about collecting a new army and further expanding his great fleet. His ambition to recover his father's kingdom, and perhaps to reconstitute Alexander's empire under his own rule, was all too obvious. The kings so threatened banded together in self-defence to stop him, as they had repeatedly done in fact of his father's power, though this time a long campaign and a great battle were not needed. King Pyrrhos of Epiros was also Demetrios' enemy; he invaded Macedon, with how much encouragement from the others is not known, though he was a long-time client and former son-in-law of Ptolemy. Ptolemy himself had already moved his fleet into the Aegean and had seduced the Island League from Demetrios' grasp. Pyrrhos' invasion was accompanied by moves by Lysimachos, who took his army westwards along the Thracian coast to besiege Amphipolis. It seems reasonable to assume a coordination of all these attacks, just as the temporal conjunction of the moves in Asia implies the same. Pyrrhos, who was known to, and popular with, the Macedonians, found that they would no longer fight for Demetrios—though they resisted Lysimachos—and Demetrios found that his kingdom simply evaporated from around him.[21]

Amid all these events and developments, the rivalry between Seleukos and Ptolemy stalled. Demetrios was the greater threat to both, and this time it was Ptolemy who was most involved in the hostilities, while Seleukos, far from the scene of the action, had to stand by, though he did profit by the acquisition of Kilikia. Ptolemy was able, no doubt by the use of his fleet, to take advantage of Demetrios' collapse and take over Tyre and Sidon, a prize he had surely earned this time. The king of Sidon, Philokles, continued in his office, and became a notable naval commander for Ptolemy, so it would appear likely that negotiations had taken place before Ptolemy's acquisition of the cities.[22] Seleukos cannot have been pleased; he had earlier indicated his strong interest in acquiring the cities himself. There was, however, not much he could do, particularly since the takeover appears to have been peaceful. In Demetrios' hands they had acted as an obvious restraint on actions in

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[21] Will, *CAH* VII.1, 107–108.

[22] The date of this is unclear, but 288 or 287 seems reasonable: K. Merker, 'Demetrios Poliorcetes and Tyre', *Ancient History* 5, 1974, 119–126; J. Seibert, 'Philokles Sohn des Apollodoros, König von Sidonier', *Historia* 19, 1970, 337–351.

Syria by Ptolemy, but now Syria was divided between just two hostile kings; with no third party present Ptolemy's action brought open conflict nearer.

In the event, Seleukos was not left wholly out of the fighting. Demetrios, with a mainly mercenary army, attacked Lysimachos, and captured a few cities in the west of Asia Minor. He was then pushed steadily eastwards by the skilful generalship, and the larger army, of Lysimachos' capable son Agathokles. To escape, Demetrios crossed the Taurus Mountains into Kilikia, which he quickly overran, but his diminished army was then blocked from further movement by Agathokles to the north and by Seleukos to the east. Demetrios made an attempt to cross the Amanus, but Seleukos surrounded his weakened forces with his own larger army. Clearly understanding the condition of Demetrios' soldiers, weakened, hungry, and demoralized, and considerably reduced in number, Seleukos made it clear that there was no escape, by demonstrating to Demetrios' army that they were wholly surrounded, then he stood forward himself, alone and helmetless, to appeal to them to give up. This was a gesture the mercenaries appreciated. On a promise from him to spare Demetrios' life, they surrendered.[23]

Seleukos' promise was scarcely necessary, for Demetrios was much more valuable alive than dead. He was held prisoner, with the implied threat that he could be released if any of the other kings merited being attacked. (He was also Seleukos' former father-in-law, and the father-in-law of his son Antiochos, though it is unlikely that such constraints swayed him very much.) Demetrios' son Antigonos still held several cities in Greece and commanded a large part of Demetrios' fleet. Neither Lysimachos nor Seleukos had cared to attack Demetrios directly, even as his army diminished in size, such was his military skill and reputation; and Lysimachos offered Seleukos 2000 talents to have Demetrios killed. Seleukos publicly refused this bribe, and so gained further public kudos for doing so.[24] For Seleukos Demetrios alive was still useful: a diplomatic card to play, or a threat to wield.

Demetrios' débâcle had been a warning that over-ambition could lead to collapse. None of the three surviving kings could be accused of that, for they had all survived and prospered by being cautious, and lived to a great age as a result. Lysimachos had acquired part of the Macedonian kingdom as a result of Demetrios' collapse, and was soon able to push the

[23] Plut., *Demetrios*, 46–49.
[24] Plut., *Demetrios*, 51.

erratic Pyrrhos out of much of the rest, but he then became embroiled in a nasty internal court dispute as a result of which he ordered the execution of his son Agathokles. As the sequel showed, this sensibly reduced the support he received from many of his subjects.[25]

The problem all the kings faced was the same as that which had recently destroyed both the Macedonian Argead dynasty and the house of Antipater: there was no system in place for organizing the succession to a king. The process in Macedon had been to limit the candidates for the succession to one of the living, preferably adult, male members of the Argead family, but this regularly produced murder among the claimants and a political collapse of the kingdom—the collapse after Alexander's death was a good example, only the latest of many. The only Macedonian royal succession which had happened peacefully in the last two centuries was that of Alexander the Great's succession to his father Philip II—and Alexander had recently been in exile, Philip himself had been murdered, Queen Olympias had murdered Philip's latest wife and daughter, and Alexander killed several possible claimants once he became king. This counted as a peaceful succession in Macedonian terms. And when Alexander himself died, he left only incompetent and infant heirs, and thereby in effect ensured that his family would die out.[26]

The kings in the 280s were all of them concerned to contrive a peaceful succession to themselves. By 285 Lysimachos, Seleukos, and Ptolemy were all in their seventies, being contemporaries of Alexander, and none of them could expect to live much longer. All of them had seen the irresponsibility of Alexander over the succession and, having spent their whole lives in scrambling to acquire and enlarge a kingdom, and then establishing and organizing it, none of them was willing to allow his inheritance to be dissipated by neglecting to provide for the succession.

Demetrios, on being captured, had sent a message to his son Antigonos Gonatas with instructions to believe no orders claiming to emanate from him;[27] in effect, Demetrios thereby abdicated in Antigonos' favour, and Antigonos called himself a king from now on. Seleukos at least implicitly recognized this, for when Demetrios died in 283, still his prisoner, if in luxurious circumstances, Seleukos sent his ashes to Antigonos, who

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[25] H.S. Lund, *Lysimachos*, London 1992, 183–198.

[26] See J.D. Grainger, *Alexander the Great Failure*, London 2008, for a discussion on this.

[27] Plut., *Demetrios*, 51.

brought out his whole fleet to receive them.[28] This by implication recognized Antigonos' kingship. The Antigonid succession was thus relatively straightforward, and continued to be so, but in this it was unusual.

Seleukos himself had already dealt with the succession issue by handing on his second wife to his son, and setting up Antiochos in a virtually independent kingdom in the east. There, in Baktria and eastern Iran, Antiochos, the son of the Macedonian Seleukos and the Sogdian princess Apama, ruled with considerable success for ten years and more. In effect he and Seleukos were joint kings from 294 onwards, each in his own half of the kingdom, and Antiochos was clearly designated as his father's successor.[29] Seleukos had another son, Akhaios, who does not appear to have disputed this, though he was also to be well provided for.[30] By giving Antiochos a kingdom to rule at a great distance from the main court, Seleukos successfully avoided the claustrophobic nastiness which engulfed Lysimachos' court.

It seems that Ptolemy was also conscious of his age and the need to organize the succession. His court was the scene of an unpleasant intrigue, but one which did not so much end in internal violence as export it to others. Both Ptolemy and Lysimachos had stoked up trouble for themselves by indulging in several marriages, not to mention producing children outside these marriages as well. The precise events in the courts of Ptolemy and Lysimachos are not relevant here, but during 284–282 they produced contrasting results. Ptolemy chose as his designated successor one of his sons by his latest wife, Berenike (but not his oldest son). He became Ptolemy II, surnamed Philadelphos, and this was signalled by his appointment as joint king, in 285 or 284. The elder Ptolemy lived on to the end of 283 and Ptolemy II went through a new ceremony of coronation in January 282.[31] The succession had therefore been accomplished, though at the cost of a court crisis, the expulsion of an earlier wife, Eurydike, and a good deal of family ill-feeling.

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[28] Plut., *Demetrios*, 53.

[29] J.D. Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, London 1991, 193.

[30] The parentage of Akhaios is nowhere attested, but the best interpretation of the indirect evidence is that he was Seleukos' younger son; his family conspicuously used Seleukid royal names and intermarried with the royal family. He emerged in the 260s as a major landowner in Asia Minor and, given his complete absence from the region earlier, Seleukid royal favour is the best explanation for his power, wealth, and social position. (I have changed my mind on this since I composed the entry in J.D. Grainger, *A Seleukid Prosopography and Gazetteer*, Leiden 1997.)

[31] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 24–25.

Those expelled from Ptolemy's court went to Lysimachos, where they contributed to the court crisis which resulted in the execution of Agathokles. Lysimachos then faced the prospect of passing the succession to a teenage boy dominated by his mother, Arsinoe II (a daughter of Ptolemy I and the exiled Eurydike). This was exactly what had gone wrong in Macedon when Kassander died. Agathokles had built up a considerable following within the kingdom, and this was perhaps one of the reasons which persuaded Lysimachos to have him killed; his killing, however, greatly reduced their loyalty to Lysimachos.

Agathokles' wife and children fled to Seleukos. Also at Seleukos' court was Ptolemy II's main rival for the Egyptian throne, his half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos. The result, for Lysimachos, was a steady erosion of his authority, which the existence of young children as his heirs was unable to arrest. The four methods of contriving a succession to a kingship had produced four different results: effective division of the kingdom by Seleukos, crisis and expulsion of defeated claimants by Ptolemy, murder and expulsion by Lysimachos; defeat and a smooth transition by Demetrios.

The result was a crisis in each of the kingdoms, but not simultaneously. Ptolemy II found that an unconsidered relative, his half-brother Magas, who had been in charge in Cyrenaica for twenty years, was not willing to accept further subordination; he began to act with greater independence from now on; the fact that he had ruled Cyrenaica quietly for two decades rather suggests that he had been successful in gathering local support, rather in the way Ophellas had in the same region.

Lysimachos went down to disaster. Seleukos' collection of royal claimants put him in a notably strong position. Ptolemy Keraunos' presence could be used to threaten Ptolemy II, who also faced internal difficulties in securing his own succession. These largely paralyzed Ptolemy's ability to intervene outside Egypt for some time. Seleukos also had Agathokles' widow and children with him as an alternative to Lysimachos' gloomy rule. So, with Ptolemy neutralised and Lysimachos paralysed, Seleukos gathered his army and invaded Asia Minor in 282. His military inferiority was neutralized by the collapse of Lysimachos' regime, and several of Lysimachos' more important subjects either fought for Seleukos or did not fight against him. In 281 Lysimachos was defeated in another of the great battles, at Koroupedion, and died.[32] Seleukos then, having made

[32] Lund, *Lysimachos*, 201–206; Grainger, *Seleukos*, 182–183.

a start on reorganizing Asia Minor, set out to establish his authority in Macedon. The success against Lysimachos, however, made him a threat to everyone else—his was the power of Antigonos and Demetrios revived—and particularly to Ptolemy. He also had to cope with the exiles at his court, who had presumably been given promises of favour if he won. This last factor was the disastrous one. On the way to take over in Macedon, Seleukos was murdered by Ptolemy Keraunos, who had been, as he thought, deprived of the Egyptian kingdom by his half-brother, and now saw that Seleukos had no intention of setting up anyone other than his own son as king.[33] Keraunos rode off westwards to become acclaimed as king in Macedon, and in the other direction the message spread that Seleukos was dead. At the far end of the communication line Antiochos was told. By that time Seleukos' kingdom had partly broken down, like Lysimachos'.

Since the fall of Antigonos in 301, Seleukos and Ptolemy had fought other kings but never each other. Seleukos had, of course, proclaimed that he would not do so, that Ptolemy was his friend, but the behaviour of both men suggests that a war would have happened had they seen a clear advantage in it. This condition of suppressed hostility, combined with their deliberate and extensive efforts to develop their military resources, is best characterized as a Cold War. Both used the stand-off in Syria as the essential basis for organizing their foreign relations, and sought to recruit allies or to acquire territory in order to gain an advantage in their mutual competition. Both devoted much attention to the internal development of their kingdoms, by conciliating the native inhabitants, by encouraging the immigration of Greeks, and by initiating the construction of cities (by Seleukos), and an effective governmental bureaucracy (by Ptolemy).

The overall purpose of all their preparations was to develop sufficient strength either to attack the enemy, in Seleukos' case, or to defend his gains, in Ptolemy's. But the prize was always Syria. Neither aimed to dispossess the other of his kingdom. When Seleukos was victorious over Lysimachos he came nearer than anyone, even Antigonos, to reuniting the bits of Alexander's empire into a whole. Yet he did not proclaim such an aim, so far as we can tell, and his son, Antiochos I, when he came west to inherit the whole kingdom, was content enough to see Antigonos II as king in Macedon. That is, it was not the dynastic aim

33 Memnon, *FGrH* 434, F 11.8.1–3 = Austin 159.

of any of the Seleukid kings, beginning with Seleukos, to reconstitute the Macedonian empire. He and Antiochos and their successors never aimed at removing the Ptolemies from Egypt. The ideology, if such a pretentious word may be used, of the Seleukid kings was to maintain their kingdom, and, when it was broken, to restore it—an aim particularly associated with Antiochos III. In that aim, Syria figured always as one of their lost provinces, just as, later, did Baktria and Asia Minor.

The result of all the state-building work of the first kings was the firm establishment of their kingdoms, geographically and socially. The rival kingdoms and kingships of Antigonos and Kassander and Lysimachos failed remarkably easily in large part because none of them seriously attended to these development issues. (Macedon, a well-established kingdom, did not suffer such a problem; the problem there was to find a king with sufficient sense to accept the kingdom as its inhabitants saw it: Kassander did, but no other king did so for the next quarter of a century.)

The difference between the kingdoms of Seleukos and Ptolemy, on the one hand, and those of Antigonos and Lysimachos, on the other, lay in exactly those elements: internal cohesion and development was promoted by the kings, and the succession to the king was carefully organized before the founders' deaths. In neither case, in fact, was the succession easy, but the general loyalty to the first king which was brought about by his work was sufficient to hold the two kingdoms together until a capable successor took charge. And one of the causes of the whole situation was the rivalry of the Cold War between these two first kings. This had simultaneously promoted the firm foundation of the kingdoms and at the same time sowed the seeds of the continuing hostility between them. In the end this was one of the main causes of their destruction, but not for a couple of centuries. The other main cause, internal dynastic conflict, did not seriously affect either family for a long time. Again it was in all likelihood one of the achievements of the founders to instil a continuing family loyalty. Once such a feeling is established it becomes part of the family pride.

The great stimulus to development had been the mutual but muted hostility between Seleukos and Ptolemy. The clear likelihood was that in the relatively near future they would fight each other. This required both to fortify their parts of Syria (the Ptolemaic fortification will be considered in the next chapter, but note that the cities he acquired were already walled), and to establish their authority firmly in their separate provinces. The results were a rapid development of Syria, particularly in

the northern, Seleukid, part, and the increased authority of the royal governments generally. Even before they had begun, the Syrian Wars were having a powerful effect.

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE NEW KINGS, AND THE FIRST SYRIAN WAR

In all the great kingdoms in this new world, during 282 and 281, new kings took power, while one kingdom (Lysimachos') vanished. Ptolemy II was crowned in January 282 and, having had two years as joint king he was presumably up-to-date on the methods of government and the problems of the kingdom. His half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos rode off to Macedon after his murder of Seleukos, and was accepted there as king, but only of Macedon, not the rest of Seleukos' kingdom. His method of acquiring the throne, by murdering his competitor for the throne, was, in Macedonian terms, quite normal, and if he could prove himself to be a successful war leader, his origin and the mode of his succession would be ignored. He was challenged by Antigonos Gonatas, the son of Demetrios, but Keraunos beat him in a sea battle, employing no doubt his share of Demetrios' fleet against Antigonos' share. Antigonos retired to his Greek base. Keraunos was next challenged by his half-sister, Arsinoe II, the widow of Lysimachos. She had fled from the collapse of her hopes in Asia Minor with her sons. She went first to Ephesos, where a riot drove her out, then to the Kassandreia in Macedon, when she seized control of the city. In Asia Minor she would have been one of the problems for Seleukos to deal with; now she was Keraunos'.[1]

The third of the new kings was Antiochos, the eldest son of Seleukos. Unlike the others, he was not present or nearby when his father died. Where exactly he was we do not know. He had been ruling the eastern half of the kingdom, Baktria and its neighbouring provinces, since being sent there with his new wife in 294/293; in view of Seleukos' war in Asia Minor in 282–281 it seems possible that Antiochos was rather closer to events than the farthest east, but we do not know where he was. Certainly he was not in either Anatolia or Syria, and it seems unlikely he was in Babylonia. Ekbatana in Media would be a good place for him to observe events in the west.

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[1] For the Ptolemaic succession see Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 35–36; for Macedon, W.W. Tarn, *Antigonos Gonatas*, Oxford 1913, 130–135.

Seleukos was killed late in the summer at the farthest western part of his kingdom, near Lysimacheia in the Hellespontine Chersonesos. A Babylonian document which lists the kings of the Hellenistic period reigning in Babylon from Alexander onwards dates his death to 'month VI' of year 31, which translates to late August or early or mid-September of 281 BC.[2] Unfortunately it does not date Antiochos' arrival from the east. Another inscription, however, from Ilion on the Hellespont, by implication indicates that he had to exert himself to ensure the obedience of both the Seleukis—that is, north Syria—and Asia Minor. The decree of the city is one honouring the king for his work in imposing peace, particularly in Asia Minor, which was Ilion's neighbourhood, and incidentally it notes that 'he sought to bring back to peace and their former prosperity the cities of the Seleukis'.[3] This obviously implies that those cities had been disturbed, and were possibly disobedient, and perhaps that Antiochos had to use force to establish his authority—but it is by no means clear and unambiguous. The decree ascribes the trouble to 'rebels from his cause'. He had to mobilize his army to 'fight for his interests' and 'recover his ancestral rule' by 'attacking those hostile to his interests'. The wording is not precise nor does it provide any real detail, but the general tone is clear—Antiochos had to use violence to impose his rule in north Syria. It is not certain if these 'rebels' were citizens of the Syrian cities or of others, nor that those he had to fight were internal or external enemies. The decree remarks next that 'now' Antiochos has come into Asia Minor—'this side of Mount Taurus'—where he has 'restored peace and advanced his interests'. This section is notably less martial in tone, though it is remarked that his army was required to ensure peace.

This is the prolegomenon to the main business of the decree, which is to describe the honours voted by the city to the king. These were considerable, including a golden equestrian statue set up at the city's sanctuary of Athena. It is clear that the city felt grateful for the king's work, for the decree is less vaguely effusive and more pragmatic than most; this was, that is, not a bland familiarity, a going-through-the-motions honorary decree such as became the pattern later, but was a rendering of thanks by the city for Antiochos' achievements, notably in Ilion's region. That is, as the decree comes closer to the city itself it gains in precision; the composer of the decree was not much concerned with

[2] A.J. Sachs and D.J. Wiseman, 'A Babylonian King List', *Iraq*, 16, 1954, 202–211 (= Austin 158).

[3] *OGIS* 219 = *I. Ilion* 21 (= Austin 162); Ma, *Antiochos III*, 254–259.

precise events in Syria, nor even in most of Asia Minor. And so this is a most uncertain basis on which to base wider conclusions concerning Antiochos' work in Syria.

What actually occurred in these areas is therefore not known, except for the implications of the decree's wording. Some points may be made, however. Seleukos had spent several months in Anatolia between his victory at Korupedion in the early part of the year and his departure and murder in August or September; his work then had been in organising and settling the government of the area he had conquered. He had not been successful in imposing his rule in the north, where the kings of Bithynia and Pontos and the oligarchs of the city of Herakleia Pontike defied him,[4] but elsewhere his work was apparently well enough received to endure, so that when Antiochos sent his representative, his father's general Patrokles, over the Taurus, he was generally welcomed. Some local notables were already Seleukid loyalists, such as Philetairos the lord of Pergamon, who collected Seleukos' body from where it lay after the murder, and delivered it to his son.[5] That is, he was able to reach out from Pergamon to Lysimacheia without difficulty. A good deal of Anatolia was under the rule of men like Philetairos, possessors of huge estates and / or cities, who clearly saw the value to themselves of accepting the new king. The war in Anatolia had threatened such men's authority; these had held the line until Patrokles, then Antiochos, arrived.

The situation in the Seleukis of Syria was different. There the local authorities were the new cities, founded and developed in the last two decades, and there is no sign of any 'dynasts' as the great lords in Anatolia are called. The cities were populated by a mix of peoples, all of them newly arrived migrants, Syrians (from the countryside), Macedonians, Greeks of various origins—in Antioch there were contingents had come from Athens, from Cyprus, and from Macedon; the inhabitants of defunct and dismantled Antigoneia were also incorporated into the city, and these were also originally Athenians and Macedonians. And, of course, the majority of the population were Syrians. It would take more than a couple of decades to bring a mixed population such as this into automatic loyalty to their new city and their king. As cities, they were raw, unfinished, and the populations politically unintegrated; physically they were still a-building, and no doubt much of their interiors were still like building sites.

4 Memnon, *FGrH* 434, F 11, paras 6–7 (= Austin 159).

5 App., *Syr*. 63.

The system of government is not clear at this early period, but by considering these as cities of the Macedonian type we can say that they will have been given a typical Greek City Council (*boule*) chosen from amongst the citizens and that the citizenship was restricted to Greek-speaking adult males, with probably a wealth condition attached. Antigoneia is said to have had 5300 citizens; this may be the basic citizen size of all the cities at the start, though all four of the cities of the Seleukis grew much larger than that, and it seems unlikely that the number of citizens was permanently restricted. All the cities were equipped with an acropolis, and all these were carefully placed on a height to dominate the inhabitants—and these forts were garrisoned by the king's soldiers. The real power therefore lay with the king as the commander of these garrisons; Seleukos had not been relying too heavily on the loyalty of the new inhabitants, nor did his successors.[6]

The man who had organized, paid for, and overseen the foundation and growth of these cities was now dead. The reactions of the inhabitants to the news of Seleukos' death is only possibly indicated by the Ilion decree's phrase 'rebels from his cause' and this may not refer to the cities. But disorientation is the minimum we should expect among the citizens; some were no doubt bent on a republican independence, others may have hoped for a new and different royal regime. Considerable numbers of these people came from cities with anti-monarchical histories—Athens, for example. At some point the new King Antiochos or his representative arrived. He sent Patrokles into Asia Minor, so he may have sent another of his generals in advance into Syria. The heterogeneous populations partly refused to obey, and there was some fighting, as is indicated by the Ilion decree. It did not last long, for Antiochos was soon able to move on into Asia Minor.

This set of troubles, which did not last long, has been called a 'war of succession', but this is clearly misleading. There was, in the first place, no question of Antiochos not succeeding as king, and there was no competition for the kingship, at least so far as we know; second, to describe it as a war is probably also going too far. Antiochos certainly became involved in some fighting in Asia Minor, and there may have been some conflict in Syria, but the two cases are quite separate. Just how much weight to put on the characterization of his opponents in Syria as 'rebels' by the Ilians is uncertain; whatever their cause and their means,

[6] Grainger, *Cities*, 86–87.

they did not last long (and the Ilion decree may not be based on good information); Antiochos was able to reach Asia Minor by 280, much less than a year after his father's death. There was no war in Syria.[7]

It has been suggested that the Syrian trouble, whatever it amounted to, was fomented by Ptolemy II.[8] He certainly took advantage of the Seleukid confusion to fasten his control more strongly on a number of coastal cities of south and west Asia Minor. But these places were either his already, such as Korakesion in Pamphylia and Phaselis in Lykia, and several in Karia, or they were under no outside control: Seleukos' control never reached into the south of the peninsula, except in Kilikia. So Ptolemy's activity, conducted by sea, so far as we know of it, does not imply active war with Antiochos. Intrigue and conspiracy in Syria are not ruled out, but the Seleukid 'war of succession' was an internal matter (and, of course, it did not concern the royal succession as such, and was probably not really a war; it is time the phrase was abandoned).

Once the dust had settled, however, Ptolemy II was in a considerably stronger position than before. He had firm control of Egypt and south and central Syria, of Cyprus, and of a string of port cities in Asia Minor from Korakesion round to Miletos, he was patron of the Island League in the Kyklades, and he had bases in several of the other islands of the Aegean, and in Greece (at Methana in the Argolid). Further his half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos was now king in Macedon, and had been accepted as such by Ptolemy II with the understanding, explicit or implicit, that neither would make any attempt on the other's position: that is, Keraunos gave up any claim to Egypt, apparently in writing, though he was scarcely the most trustworthy of the political players of the time.[9] Ptolemy II's other half-brother Magas was his viceroy in Cyrenaica, for the moment loyal, but ambitious for a greater kingdom.

Antiochos, having had to impose his will on his inheritance by more or less violent means, at least in Syria, but also to some extent in Asia Minor, could be excused if he felt threatened by all these Ptolemies. He inherited, of course, not just the kingdom he was to rule, but the claims of his father to rule in Ptolemaic Koile Syria, in northern Asia Minor, and in Macedon. Ptolemy had acquired a few extra territories, of no great size or wealth, but had not overtly interfered in Antiochos' troubles; these

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7 For discussion, cf. A. Mastrocinque, '"Guerra di successione", e primi Guerra de Cele Siria', *Ancient Society* 24, 1993, 27–39.

8 W.W. Tarn, 'The First Syrian War', *JHS* 46, 1926, 155–162.

9 Justin 17.2.9.

actions suggested that he also had accepted his father's policy of holding what he had acquired, but not going much further. That is, Ptolemy II, despite his gains, was now essentially on the defensive; Antiochos, on the other hand, despite his troubles, was in as aggressive a state of mind as his father had been. Seleukos had shown signs of an ambition to reunite Alexander's empire; Antiochos may have inherited that along with the kingdom.

Neither king was for the present in a condition to attack the other. Ptolemy was defensively minded, content to hold what he had; Antiochos was prevented from attempting to seize what he claimed, partly by the aftermath of his disturbed inheritance, and partly by the external troubles which still afflicted him in Asia Minor. The relations between the two kings therefore involved three elements: each searched for a chink the other's armour; each sought allies; each sought for ways to increase his own military power. This last was a long-term business; the first two were elements of the policies of both kings in the 270s, and pursuing them brought them fairly quickly to war.

Antiochos' success in controlling Syria reduced any chance for Ptolemy to succeed in provoking trouble there in the years immediately after 280. In Asia Minor, however, matters were much more unsettled, for in 279 Antiochos was at war with the Bithynian king, with Antigonos Gonatas, and perhaps also with Ptolemy Keraunos. Antiochos soon reduced his problems by making peace and an alliance with Antigonos, and simply ignoring Keraunos. He could therefore concentrate on fighting his northern enemies.[10] In such circumstances Ptolemy II did not need to do much more than perhaps offer Keraunos some vocal support.

The main challenge for control of Macedon which Keraunos faced came from his half-sister Arsinoe II and her three sons in occupation of Kassandreia. This was removed when he offered Arsinoe marriage instead of war. Being quite as unscrupulous as her new husband, she accepted, but he turned murderous on the wedding night, killing her two youngest sons (the eldest son had mistrusted him from the start and was absent). Arsinoe fled again, first to Samothrace, then to her full brother Ptolemy II in Egypt.[11] Her influence on him is said to have been considerable, and her description of Keraunos was no doubt inflammatory.

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[10] Tarn, *Antigonos Gonatas* 160–164.
[11] Justin 17.2.9 and 24.2–3.

Ptolemy II did not allow this to influence his policy,[12] so far as can be seen, but presumably he would not have been sorry to see someone else tackling Keraunos.

None of the competitors could match another Macedonian enemy, however, whose arrival upset the whole incipient international balance. In 279, after he had been king in Macedon for something over a year, Keraunos was attacked by bands of Kelts, whom the Greeks called Galatians, from over his northern frontier.[13] He was defeated, captured, and then murdered in the early stages of the invasion, and the whole Macedonian kingdom was quickly overrun. The cities survived behind their fortifications, but the country areas were occupied and comprehensively looted and destroyed. No one from outside Macedon was able to influence events there for at least two years. Meanwhile, Antiochos was concentrating on his war in the north of Anatolia. This was affected by an internal succession dispute in Bithynia, and in order to gain advantage one of the disputants, Nikomedes, contacted a Galatian band which had been trying to cross into Asia for some time. He provided transport and they eliminated his enemy, then they moved south and set out to plunder the lands of the Asian cities, which were eminently lootable, and were subjects in many cases, of Nikomedes' enemy Antiochos.[14] A second band tricked their way across the Hellespont and joined in.[15] Perforce Antiochos abandoned his war with Bithynia and its allies and concentrated on attempting to deal with the Galatians.

In Macedon a whole series of kings and commanders went down to defeat and death before the Galatian attacks. Antigonos Gonatas, based in Greece and with a substantial fleet under his command, came north to the Hellespont. He and Antiochos had fought a brief war, whose cause is not known, though it was presumably concerned with their conflicting claims to the Macedonian kingship. The arrival of the Galatians gave them a mutual enemy, and Antigonos the possibility of actually getting into Macedon, which was by this time effectively without a ruler. Antiochos, on the other hand, could now see that this would be impossible for him for at least the foreseeable future. The two men made

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12 The influence of Arsinoe on her brother has probably been exaggerated; cf. S.M. Burstein, 'Arsinoe II Philadelphos: a Revisionist view', in *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, Washington DC 1982, 197–212

13 G. Natchtergael, *Les Galates en Grèce et le Sotéria de Delphes*, Brussels 1977.

14 Memnon, *FGrH* 434, F 11, para 11 = Austin 159.

15 Livy 38.16.6–7.

peace and an alliance, Antigonos being promised the hand of Seleukos and Stratonike's daughter Phila when he had a kingdom. (She was in fact Antigonos' niece, he and Stratonike being siblings.).[16]

The alliance was made in 278, though the disparity in their respective strengths meant that Antigonos was in effect Antiochos' client. Antigonos had a small success against an unwary Galatian band in 277 (fighting in Antiochos' territory by the Hellespont), and used the propaganda value of this to muscle his way to the Macedonian kingship,[17] at which time he claimed his bride. He solved the problem of the roving bands of Galatian looters by recruiting some into his army and using these to drive out their fellows. Even when that was done, however, Macedon, exhausted, ravaged, and with its population gravely reduced, was counted out as a military and political power for the next decade and more.

An alliance between Antiochos and Antigonos was scarcely the outcome desired by Ptolemy II, though the elimination of Keraunos may have been as welcome to him as to the other kings. Antiochos, however, was only marginally strengthened by this, for he was kept busy in Asia Minor fighting the nasty and elusive Galatians. The fighting went on for several years, with Antiochos winning a major victory in the 'elephant battle', in which the elephants inherited from his father were used with effect. But the Galatians were not yet an organized political entity, and even a lost battle did not prevent surprise raids by small bands being mounted. They continued to be a nuisance, if a reduced one, for two generations yet.

The date of the elephant victory is disputed, 275, 272, and 270, even 269, all having strong advocates. A well-argued case for 272 has been largely ignored in favour of the interpretation of an inscription from near Laodikeia-ad-Lykon, which is thought to favour a dating in the early 260s.[18] In fact the inscription cannot bear the interpretation put on it. The villagers and officials mentioned in it referred to the Galatian war as having happened before they recorded their resolution, which was in January 267, but how long before that date they do not say. They are actually giving thanks for the return of captives taken from the village who had been ransomed by Akhaios, their ultimate landlord. This cannot

[16] Tarn, *Antigonos Gonatas*, 168; details and chronology here are uncertain.

[17] Ibid, 165.

[18] B. Bar-Kochva, 'On the Sources and Chronology of Antiochos I's Battle against the Galatians', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society* 119, 1973, 1–8; M. Wörrle, 'Antiochos I, Achaios der Altëre und die Galater', *Chiron* 5, 1975, 59–87.

be used to date the elephant victory, though it does imply that the war with the Galatians was over, at least for the time being. So all that can be said is that the victory was won before January 267—probably. 272 is still a better date than most.

In fact the fighting against the Galatians tended to revive periodically, and no formal end to the Galatian war can be located. It seems clear that Antiochos was heavily, if perhaps intermittently, involved in Galatian fighting throughout much of the decade following their crossing into Asia Minor in 276. But he was not the only one fighting, for the smaller Galatian raids had to be combatted by local resistance. Philetairos of Pergamon and his nephew and heir Eumenes I gained considerable reputations for their determined resistance to these Galatian attacks, and other cities honoured individuals who showed particular heroism and/or command abilities—and several places honoured Antiochos for his successes.[19]

In such circumstances, given that Antiochos had recovered well from the incipient collapse of his kingdom in 281–280, and had gone on to acquire the alliance with Antigonos, Ptolemy II might have been tempted to take advantage of the Seleukid problems in Asia Minor. He was certainly in contact with the Galatians, since in 274 he had a force of at least 4000 of them in his employ in Egypt as mercenaries.[20] He could well have encouraged their fellows in both Macedon and Asia Minor to continue the fight against Antigonos and Antiochos. And Antiochos was not so wholly absorbed in the affairs of Asia Minor as to neglect the possibility of Egyptian threats and interference. Sometime in the mid-270s his daughter Apama was married to Magas of Cyrenaica; thus encouraged, Magas proclaimed himself king and marched on Egypt.

This sequence is, at least, the presumed order of events. The march on Egypt took place in 274, and by that time Magas was calling himself king.[21] Since he could not threaten Ptolemy in any convincing way unless Ptolemy was also being threatened from elsewhere (though he may have subverted key people in Egypt), it is assumed that he was already married to Apama and so allied with Antiochos. Such a marriage was obviously a

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[19] The great monument at Pergamon, sections of which were copied by later Roman sculptors, was a celebration of allied victory: E. Kunzl, *Die Kelten des Epigonos von Pergamon*, Wurzburg 1971; J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, Cambridge, 1986, 83–93.

[20] Pausanias 1.7.2; Callimachos 4.185–187; H.P. Lambscher, 'Ein Ptolemäischer Gallierdenkmal', *Antike Welt*, 32, 1987, 131–154.

[21] Pausanias 1.7.1.

political act, and it clearly signalled a break between Magas and Ptolemy. Further, it had no doubt been discussed and negotiated for some time before the wedding ceremony took place. I would suggest the original contact between Magas and Antiochos perhaps took place up to a couple of years before the fighting began, and so, perhaps in 276, in all likelihood before the Galatian invasion of Asia Minor. Antiochos was no doubt encouraged in such an intrigue by the political success of the alliance with Antigonos Gonatas and his marriage with Phila, which also took place in 276, by which time Antigonos was in post as king in Macedon. Apama was, it seems, the third child of Antiochos and Stratonike, whose marriage had taken place in 294; Apama was thus perhaps born in about 290, and would be fifteen years old, and so of marriageable age by 276. These several calculations—each of which is, of course, only an approximation—suggest a wedding therefore in 275, with Magas making himself king then or soon after.

The precise details of events and their interconnections and repercussions are not recoverable, but two major sets of events certainly occurred. First in time was the action of Magas, who, probably in 275, declared himself king, and marched on Egypt in 274. He was prevented from going very far by a rising—or rebellion, or invasion—by the native Libyans, who threatened the Greek cities and their lands in Cyrenaica, and he had to turn back to see off the trouble. In turn, Ptolemy proposed, and perhaps even began, to invade Cyrenaica, but was himself prevented from doing so by a rising—or rebellion, or mutiny—by his corps of Galatian mercenaries, also in 274. We do not know, even in the most general way, how Magas faced down his Libyan enemies, though he certainly succeeded in doing so, perhaps merely by returning to Cyrenaica with his army. For Ptolemy, however, we know he somehow manoeuvred his Galatians onto an island in the Nile, where they are said to have starved to death and killed each other.[22] It would seem that his regular and militia forces were unable or unwilling to attack the Galatians, but he was able to isolate them by a cordon of ships. The affairs, both in Cyrenaica and Egypt, clearly took some time—starving a body of 4000 soldiers to death does not happen quickly. In turn these events would seem to have prevented any action by Ptolemy for perhaps a year, while Antiochos became embroiled in the Galatian war. And in 274, or so it seems, a war began between Ptolemy and Antiochos.

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[22] Cf. note 20.

Ptolemy II was under considerable pressure at this juncture. Antiochos was allied with Antigonos and Magas and so they encircled Ptolemy's territories from North Syria to Cyrenaica; the Galatian rebellion in Egypt was thus a very dangerous moment. Ptolemy survived by blockading his internal enemies—a process which took time, but in which his own loyal forces were preserved more or less intact, so that he could still deploy an army elsewhere; his external enemies were neutralized by their own troubles—Magas by the Libyan invasion, Antiochos by the Galatian war in Asia Minor. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that Ptolemy's intrigues had some involvement in these distractions, though no evidence exists; it was certainly in part intrigues by Antiochos which undermined him.

Ptolemy had celebrated the second Ptolemaia in 275, a festival he had instituted in 279, perhaps on the anniversary of his own accession in 283. The size and wealth and extravagance of this celebration were unprecedented (though it was clearly modelled on similar, if smaller, processions in old Greece, such as the Panathenaia). Within the procession there were large contingents of the army, supposedly 57,600 infantry and 23,200 cavalry.[23] Undoubtedly exaggerated, these numbers do nevertheless indicate some of the expansion in Ptolemaic military power in the previous generation. Many of these men were actually settlers (cleruchs) and sons of settlers, and were only soldiers in the reserve army. But the scale gives an indication of the dynasty's military possibilities. The blockade of the Galatian mutineers would not preoccupy that many soldiers, and Ptolemy clearly still had forces available to menace Magas (if not actually to invade Cyrenaica), and Antiochos.

Ptolemy's position in Egypt was thus under threat in 275–274 from Galatians and from Magas. He was perhaps also feeling threatened by the presence at his court of his sister Arsinoe II, the widow of Lysimachos and Ptolemy Keraunos. She intrigued to place itself close to her brother, which involved seeing to the banishment of Ptolemy's wife, Arsinoe I. In 275 or 274, brother and sister were married. In Greek circles this was seen as scandalous, or funny, but it had a powerful political purpose.[24] The marriage of siblings was normal among Egyptian dynasties and here the major object, as with the pharaohs, was to reinforce the authority and

[23] Athenaios 5.201b–f, 202f–203a; E.E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphos*, Oxford 1983; the date is disputed, and 279 / 278 is possible; 262 is probably too late.

[24] As usual the date is uncertain: Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 324, only ventures between 279 and 274.

unity of the Ptolemaic dynasty. This it did, and it also enabled Ptolemy to regulate the succession.[25] The revolt of Magas, the marriage to Arsinoe, the mercenary mutiny, the great procession, all quite probably happened within a year, and these events clearly signalled that a great crisis was under way in the Ptolemaic court. Emerging from this crisis, Ptolemy appears to have identified Antiochos as one of the causes, or perhaps he, as with so many such rulers in such a situation, picked on a foreign enemy to distract his internal foes and critics.

Ptolemy was certainly provoked. Antiochos had operated diplomatically to isolate and surround him, though it may be that Magas' decision to attack Egypt was his own. Ptolemy obviously felt that he had been menaced so seriously that his only recourse was to attack Antiochos directly, by invading northern Syria. It may also be that Ptolemy, by succeeding at home in his deft political manoeuvres (blockade, marriage, the Libyan revolt behind Magas' back), was rather carried away. The display of power in the great procession could also have given him an inflated notion of his military strength. He could also see that Antiochos was in great difficulties of his own.

The 'First Syrian War', which thus began, is only poorly known. The main source is the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries, which notes that Antiochos travelled from Sardis to Syria during the Babylonian 38th year (274–273), and that the satrap of Babylonia gathered treasure and men to send to Syria, all because 'the troops of Egypt were encamped' there—that is, in Syria, and presumably Seleukid Syria. The Babylonian troops having been collected into their units, went off to Syria in the spring of 273, and these included 20 elephants which had been sent by the satrap of Baktria. The war therefore began in 274, probably with an invasion of Syria by Ptolemaic troops.[26]

Exactly where the Ptolemaic invasion of Syria took place is not known. None of the great new cities appears to have been captured, for one might expect this to have been boasted of by Ptolemy later. Nor does Arados seem to have been affected. The invasion therefore came either by way of the Orontes valley, where there were a series of small Seleukid posts such as Arethusa and Larisa, or by sea, where the Ptolemaic navy was dominant.

In the comments, by Athenaios, after his quotation of the account of the Ptolemaic procession from Kallixeinos, the navy of Ptolemaic Egypt

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[25] See Burstein's conclusions (note 12).
[26] Sachs and Hunger, –273.

is listed. The number of ships is said to have been 4000, of which 112 are detailed as being of quinquereme size and higher, with 'twice as many' being quadriremes or less. This implies a war fleet of about 330 ships, rather less than Demetrios had aimed for, but certainly the largest fleet in the Mediterranean at the time.[27] Other ships are known to have been built for him later, so this would seem to have been his naval strength early in his reign

This great navy allowed him to dominate the coasts all around the eastern Mediterranean from Egypt to Greece; his army, even if the numbers in the review are exaggerated in Athenaios, should have given him the power to campaign strongly in Syria. But he faced considerable constraints. A substantial garrison had to remain in Egypt, particularly in view of the example of rebellion recently provided by the Galatians, and the attempted invasion by Magas; garrisons had also to be placed in all the cities in Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece which he controlled. And, of course, many of the men in the parade at the Ptolemaia were not full-time soldiers, but militiamen who could hardly be used in an invasion of northern Syria. Antiochos, on the other hand, had a battle-hardened army which had been fighting in Asia Minor for several years, and if he had brought troops with him from the east, these had been fighting for even longer. Unlike Ptolemy, Antiochos was a seasoned and successful commander. He, like his troops, had been fighting hard for years in both Baktria and Asia Minor. The defences of northern Syria were now substantial, in the form of the fortified cities founded 25 years before by Antiochos' father. Well-walled and with large populations, they made a good military foundation for an attack directed into Ptolemaic Syria. It appears that Antiochos, once he had assembled a sufficient force in Syria, was able to expel the invaders without difficulty, and, having been attacked, felt able to mount an attack himself.

Danger of attack was even apprehended in Egypt, and at one point Ptolemy II and his wife personally travelled to the eastern edge of the Nile delta to supervise work on the defences there, which is a sign that Antiochos had penetrated well into Syria.[28] It has been theorised that an item in Polyainos' collection of military stratagems refers to an

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27 Athenaios 5.202f–203e.

28 Pithom stele, translated by G. Roeder, *Die Agyptischer Gotterwelt*, Zurich 1959, 108–128

attack by Antiochos on Damascus, but this is best seen as an exploit of Antiochos III.[29] So we do not know where Antiochos I campaigned—possibly along the coast road.

The outcome of the fighting was, it seems, a stalemate, with neither side able to make a serious gain at the other's expense. Any part of Syria which fell to Antiochos was recovered by Ptolemy's forces; in Asia Minor gains balanced losses; Magas remained independent as king, but was unable to attack or subvert Egypt. During the war Antiochos fought the elephant battle to defeat the Galatians (if 272 is the correct date), so reducing the threat from them. The fact that he had to do so, while Ptolemy was presumably unable to profit from the dissension, is one of the many unanswerable problems with this war. The Galatian trouble, though, was not actually eliminated. In the end, in 271, the two kings made peace, in effect reverting to their holdings and boundaries as before the war.

The Ptolemaic empire was the more powerful state of the two in the 270s. It had not suffered the violence and disruption of a problematic succession, nor had it suffered the destructiveness of the Galatian invasions, both of which had clearly sapped, or perhaps distracted, the strength of the Seleukid kingdom. Yet Ptolemy was not apparently able to bring his power to bear in order to vanquish his weaker opponent. One obvious reason is that he had to maintain both an army capable of fighting a large war by land, and a navy capable of doing the same by sea, where the Seleukid navy was, it seems, non-existent, or very small. In a naval expedition many of the soldiers displayed in that great procession would have been in the ships. In fighting what was essentially a defensive war, even though he had begun by invading Seleukid lands, Ptolemy's forces were also dissipated into many necessary garrisons, leaving perhaps only a relatively small force as his mobile instrument for any campaign. Meanwhile Antiochos, with no navy to speak of, and with his cities held and garrisoned largely by their own populations, probably disposed of a larger force in the field, and, moreover, could choose his time and place to strike.

Yet the Seleukid kingdom had a hard time. The priest or scribe who maintained the official Astronomical Diary at Babylon's E-Sagila temple noted that the land suffered from famine and disease in 274 and 273, and that so much silver had been collected in taxes that people were using 'copper' coins (that is, bronze) in the market.[30] In Asia Minor the Galatians were able to roam and raid, if not quite so freely, even after

[29] Polyainos, *Stratagems* 4.15.
[30] Sachs and Hunger, –273.

the ‘elephant battle’. In Syria the new cities was still raw and unfinished. Where one contender (Ptolemy) was no soldier, and was essentially concerned to hold what he had, and the other (Antiochos) was facing and fighting in several directions at once, a drawn war was obviously the most likely outcome.

CHAPTER FOUR

# COMPETITIVE DEVELOPING

The pattern of the Syrian Wars reveals one diplomatic practice which is never stated in so many words, and appears to have been undetected by historians: the peace agreements which ended the various Syrian wars were made between the kings, and they were for life. The pattern is clear when the history of the wars is considered. The first war was concluded, presumably with a peace agreement, in or about 271. The second war began in 260, in the year after the death of Antiochos I; this war ended in about 253, with another peace agreement between Ptolemy II and Antiochos II—or so we must assume. The next war began in 246, soon after both of these kings died, and ended with a peace agreement between Ptolemy III and Seleukos II in 241. The next war, the fourth, began in 221, again after the death of both of the kings. Antiochos III made peace in 217 after his defeat at Raphia by Ptolemy IV, and war did not begin again until soon after the death of Ptolemy IV and the accession of Ptolemy V in 204. This is the clearest case, for Antiochos had been confident enough of the peace treaty of 217 to march off to Central Asia, and then to campaign in Asia Minor; he was effectively away from the Syrian front for fifteen years, clearly having no fear of a Ptolemaic attack during the time. After Ptolemy IV died there was an attempt to keep the change of king secret by the Egyptian government; this is usually explained by the wish of the most prominent rulers to enrich themselves; an additional reason was probably to stave off the new war which they will have expected. Those rulers in fact sent off an envoy to Antiochos III expressly requesting that he maintain the state of peace which had obtained since 217, thereby revealing that they fully expected a new war to begin.[1]

[1] This is not an issue which seems to have been discussed, probably because it is only by considering the whole sequence of the Syrian wars that the pattern emerges. Most discussion of 'war and peace' is actually about war; discussions of peace treaties are few and concentrate on Classical Greece and Republican Rome. See, as examples of the genre, the relevant essays in *War and Peace in the Ancient World*, ed. K.A. Raaflaub, Oxford 2007, or Y. Garlan, *War in the Ancient World, a Social History*, London 1976, which has one paragraph on Hellenistic treaties.

The pattern makes it obvious that the kings kept their word, and once a peace agreement was made it held until one of the principals died. There is no case of a war beginning between two kings who had already made a peace treaty. Yet it is also clear that the death of the king opened up the immediate possibility of resumed warfare. This does not seem to apply in other conflicts: republics operated on an annual basis; other kings do not seem to have engaged their honour in similar agreements, and conflicts between republics and monarchies might end with peace agreements, but these were liable to be overthrown in a new crisis. The peace agreements were therefore personal to the kings, not to the kingdoms, and they lasted for that very reason—for the honour of the kings was involved. Hellenistic kingship in the eastern Mediterranean was wholly personal, no matter what complex administrations they constructed, and in international relations only their personal honour gave any guarantee that an agreement would hold. This went for all the authority kings wielded, internally as well as internationally, and if they were forsworn much of their internal authority would fade.

Between the two dynasties in the east the pattern of peace and war is quite clear over a period of a century and a half, and it may also be seen in a later case in Baktria; Rome did not operate by the same rules, for the Senate reserved to itself the right to alter an agreement made by a magistrate in the field before ratifying it, and always against the former enemy's interests: a practice presumably profoundly alienating to the city's victims. The existence of a peace agreement between the kings, however, did not prevent extra-martial intrigue, nor did it prevent the kings from building up their resources in anticipation of a future war. And if peace with one enemy kingdom was virtually guaranteed for the rest of that king's life, or at least for the foreseeable future, then it became possible to indulge in other adventures with confidence; and these more often than not had a bearing on the main conflict.

In 271 Ptolemy II and Antiochos I made peace after their short and inconclusive war. We know nothing of the terms, just as we know very little of the fighting during the war, but neither side was credited with a victory. Ptolemy II *claimed* a victory within his kingdom, using the old Egyptian formula of having rescued the Egyptian gods from captivity amongst the enemy,[2] but there is no other sign of a decisive result, except

[2] Pithom Stele, translated by G. Roeder, *Die Agyptischer Gotterwelt*, Zurich 1959, 108–128; J.K. Winnicki, 'Carrying off and bringing home the statues of the gods', *JJurP*, 24, 1994, 149–160.

perhaps the laudatory verses of Theokritos, who cannot be trusted to be either truthful or correct.[3] Indeed, Ptolemy's actions in the next years suggest that his kingdom had survived, but that he had had something of a shock—the joint 'expedition' of Ptolemy and Arsinoe to the eastern edge of the Delta during the war is an indication that he had been apprehensive about a possible Seleukid invasion of Egypt at the time. He set to work to develop and extend his power.

In 270 Arsinoe II died. Her influence on his policy may or may not have been substantial. It is possible that her earlier experience as the wife of Lysimachos, and in Macedon after his death, provided insights into European affairs and into intrigue which Ptolemy II did not have, but the marriage was more attuned to dynastic needs than to foreign policy. Ptolemy II faced, as did every Hellenistic king, the problem of securing the succession. Ptolemy I had made him joint-king in the last two years of his own life, and he assumed sole power smoothly enough when the old king died, but Ptolemy II was not secure on the throne for several years. He was distantly threatened by his half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos, and more closely by his half-brother Magas (king in Cyrenaica until 250). Any man who was married to his sister Arsinoe would immediately acquire an interest in, and possibly a desire for, the succession, or even, more immediately, the throne itself. By marrying her himself, Ptolemy II joined their claims into one. (His other sister, Philotera, did not marry, which was another method of negating her dynastic potency.) Ptolemy and Arsinoe had no children—indeed, by the time of the marriage Arsinoe was at least forty years old—but Ptolemy had three sons and a daughter by his earlier wife Arsinoe I (whom Arsinoe II displaced). By the time Arsinoe II died, therefore, Ptolemy may have been reasonably confident that the succession was assured.[4]

The peace with Antiochos and the death of Arsinoe, both in 271–270, were followed by a burst of governmental activity in Ptolemaic Egypt, though no doubt this was more the consequence of the peace, or perhaps rather of the war, than of the death of Arsinoe. It was probably in 270/269, within a year or so of the peace, that a Ptolemaic naval expedition went through the Straits into the Black Sea to render assistance to the city of Byzantion. What exactly the problem was is not known, since

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[3] Theokritos, *Idylls*, XVII.

[4] S.M. Burstein, 'Arsinoe II Philadelphos: a Revisionist view', in *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, Washington DC 1982, 197–212, is by far the most convincing interpretation of the marriage.

the only real evidence is that the city dedicated a new temple to the king in gratitude.[5] It is not difficult to guess, however, that the basic problem was the proximity of the Galatian kingdom of Tylis to the city. The city is recorded much later as having paid tribute to the Tylian king since the Galatian invasions.[6] Ptolemy's expedition therefore did not stop that practice, but he is said to have granted the city land on the Asian side of the Straits, which would no doubt have helped the city's supply problem and reduced its vulnerability to the Galatians.

This was exactly the sort of action which both sides in the 'Syrian' conflict were able to take outside the peace agreement, and it is a good rule of thumb to assume that any international political action taken by either king in a period of peace had relevance to their competition—and that all events will have been seen by both through spectacles coloured by their mutual hostility. So the Straits expedition was not, of course, directed only at assisting Byzantion. The land given to the city was on the Asian side, and this was land which the Seleukids could claim by right of both inheritance and conquest, though it was no longer under Seleukid control. Probably it was land belonging to Bithynia or Kyzikos, or one or other of the local city-states, perhaps Chalkedon. The deed thus bound Byzantion into a Ptolemaic alliance, and put the city into a position of antagonism towards the Seleukids—or rather, since the city was already a member of the Northern League (of Bithynia, Pontos, Herakleia Pontike, and Byzantion), which had been at war with Antiochos, it was confirmed in that antagonistic stance even though that war was now a decade in the past.

By passing part of his fleet through the Straits, Ptolemy was also indicating his ability to interpose his power between the allies Antiochos I and Antigonos Gonatas, and so to threaten both at the junction of their power. These two were allies by marriage and were aligned politically with each other, though Antiochos had a claim to Macedon, which the alliance rendered latent; Macedon's weakness, and the marriage of Antigonos to Phila, meant that he was in a subordinate political position. Ptolemy's own position in the Aegean was already strong, as *hegemon* of the Island League and possessor of, or suzerain of, a number of cities in Lykia and Karia and along the Ionian coast. These powers were all bound together by the supremacy of the Ptolemaic fleet. However,

[5] Stephanos of Byzantium sv. Ankyra; Will, *Hist. Pol*, 149.
[6] Polybios 4.464.

Antigonos held Macedon as king, and his territory included Thessaly as far south as the Gulf of Volos, and he also controlled Athens, Corinth, and Chalkis, giving him a powerful position geographically very close to Ptolemy's Island League. It was also essential to him to be strong at sea, to ensure the communications between his several possessions. So Ptolemy's Black Sea expedition was a clear threat to Antigonos, since it was a naval manoeuvre, and it proclaimed Ptolemy's power in the Straits, the lifeline of the greater Greek cities, whose food supplies were dependent to some degree on the trade through the Straits. It seems unlikely that anyone needed reminding of Ptolemy's naval strength, which was near-ubiquitous in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean, so the expedition was a clear threat. The message was received loud and clear in Athens; within a year Ptolemy was in contact with anti-Antigonid politicians in Athens; within another year he and Antigonos were at war (the Khremonidean War, 267–261 BC).[7]

Ptolemy may well have rubbed in this element of his policy by sending a part of his fleet on a goodwill visit to the major power in the northern Black Sea, the Bosporan king at Pantikapaion. A painting of the occasion, or at least of one of the ships involved, has been found there. It depicts a ship called *Isis*, which has been interpreted as one of the 'hyper-galleys' which had been developed in this period. It clearly impressed the artist, and presumably the local king as well. Whether the visit persuaded the Bosporan king to change the commercial arrangements by which he sold grain to Greece is a good deal less likely; this was his main source of wealth, after all.[8] But Ptolemy's Black Sea incursion was surely effective in making his main point: that he had the power to effect an interruption to the trade should he choose to do so. It is a clear case of the effective use of sea power. Ptolemy's expedition into the Black Sea cannot have involved many ships, though *Isis* was presumably accompanied by others. The main fleet in the Aegean no doubt stayed at its normal bases. But the expedition had affected the policies of Byzantion and the Northern League, the Bosporan kingdom, and the king of Macedon. Every other city and kingdom in the Black Sea and the Aegean area was also surely impressed. And in the background were, literally, hundreds more Ptolemaic ships. It will not have escaped notice also that Antiochos,

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[7] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 40–41.

[8] L. Basch, 'The *Isis* of Ptolemy II Philadelphos', *The Mariner's Mirror* 71, 1985, 129–151.

despite his vaunted 'Elephant victory', was quite unable to counter this display of power. Ptolemy will surely have been very satisfied with the results of what to him was a fairly small expedition.

This was not the only example of the expansion and demonstration of Ptolemaic power. At about this time a naval expedition sailed the length of the Mediterranean. The only notice of this is that the admiral in command, Timosthenes of Rhodes, wrote a report which is entitled *On the Ports*, and is referred to by Eratosthenes.[9] This voyage was necessarily accomplished in consultation with Carthage, with whom relations had been repaired since the time of Agathokles of Syracuse. And about the same time a treaty relation and friendship were arranged with Rome.[10] The significance of these relationships here is less powerful than in the east; Ptolemy was apparently simply establishing cordial contacts with everyone; politically it had little significance and when the First Punic War between Rome and Carthage began in 264, any putative diplomatic system was instantly dissipated. So far as can be seen neither the Antigonids nor the Seleukids made any attempt to emulate Ptolemy Philadelphos in all this.

It is not necessary in the context of the book on the Syrian wars to go into any account of the Khremonidean War which began in 267, though it clearly occupied Ptolemy II's attention for much of the 260s. At the same time the Seleukid state was apparently at peace, though the obvious aggressiveness of the Ptolemaic state was a clear challenge. It was necessary for both kings to keep up their guard, to be constantly active in seeking small advantages (as with Ptolemy's expedition into the Black Sea), and both were competitively active in developing their financial, population, and military and naval resources.

The geostrategic situation of Ptolemy II compelled him to be powerful both by sea and by land. The demonstration cruise of *Isis* and her presumed consorts into the Black Sea emphasizes the power of the king at sea, as did the voyage of Timosthenes to the west. Mention has been made already of the size of Ptolemy's fleet, as calculated by Athenaios much later, based on an earlier source, though its exact date is not known. Of the 300-plus warships, the three largest, a 'twenty' and two 'thirties',

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[9] Cf. P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Oxford 1972, 1.152.

[10] Livy, *Periochae* 14; Dionysios of Halikarnassos 14.1–2; N.G.L. Hammond, 'Which Ptolemy gave troops and stood in protection of Pyrrhus' Kingdom?' *Historia* 37, 1988, 405–413.

were probably too large and clumsy to be of use in a fight, but he had twenty 'twelves', 'thirteens' and 'fourteens', and almost a hundred 'fives' to 'nines'.[11]

When exactly this fleet was built is not known. Ptolemy II had at least one 'ten' and one 'nine' in 257 when both are mentioned in papyri;[12] in Athenaios' list he had thirty 'nines', though no 'ten' is mentioned. An inscription from Paphos in Cyprus recorded that his architect Pyrgoteles built one 'twenty' and one 'thirty'—and perhaps the other 'thirty' as well.[13] In 306 BC at the Battle of Salamis, Ptolemy I had had nothing bigger than a quinquereme, and he lost most of his vessels in that battle anyway. So all those ships bigger than a 'five' would appear to have been built between 306 and 246, and probably between the 290s and the 250s.

Pyrgoteles was the son of Zoes, and so he was probably a Phoenician. Another Phoenician in Ptolemy II's service was Philokles, king of Sidon, who operated as Ptolemy's naval commander in the Aegean in the 270s.[14] Sidon and Cyprus, and no doubt Tyre, were probably the places where many of these great ships were constructed, with others built from imported wood by imported artisans in Egypt. Cyprus and Phoenicia would also be the source of the wood from which the ships were built, and Cyprus was probably the source of the copper in their bronze metalwork, though Egypt was also a producer of copper. Later, when Ptolemy II's grandson built a 'forty' this was done in Egypt, but this was a single grandiloquent gesture: the ship was not a serious war-vessel. The Ptolemaic navy was in large part a Phoenician creation (as had been that of Antigonos in 315–314).

This was, of course, one of the reasons Ptolemy I had seized control of both southern Syria and Cyprus, to have access to the sources of materials such as wood and copper, and to have the use of the skills of the workmen of the Phoenician cities. The island of Cyprus was safe enough from

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11 Athenaios 5.203d, from Callixeinos of Rhodes, who was describing the Pompe of Philadelphos which took place in the 270s; Callixeinos was writing some decades later.

12 *P. Cairo Zen.* 59036 (= *Select Papyri* 2.410.21) and *P. Cairo Zen.* 63 (both of 257 BC) both refer to a 'ten'; the 'nine' is mentioned in a job application of about the same time: *Sammelbuch greichische Urkunden aus Agypten*, 9780.

13 *OGIS* 39; O. Vessburg, 'Hellenistic Cyprus', in O. Vessburg and A. Westholm, *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition*, IV, 3, 220–247 at 214–225.

14 H. Hauben, 'Philokles, King of Sidon and General of the Ptolemies', *Studia Phoenicia* V, 1987.

attack while the Ptolemaic navy was numerous and powerful, but Koile Syria was obviously vulnerable to a Seleukid attack when the next war came—and since the peace agreement of 271 was a personal compact between the kings there could be no doubt that war would restart in the relatively near future. The Seleukid kings never gave up their claim to southern Syria, and Antiochos I was in his fifties by 270; he must be expected to die fairly soon, at which point his successor (or Ptolemy II) could attack.

It followed that the vulnerable provinces of Phoenicia and Palestine needed to be protected and defended, for they were not being simply held as the defences of Egypt, as was Ptolemy I's original purpose, but they were valuable for themselves. So it was no longer acceptable to use the strategy of Ptolemy I, abandoning those lands in the face of attack or, still less, of slighting the cities' defences as he withdrew. This would be playing into the hands of the Seleukid invader, whose purpose would thus be accomplished merely by an invasion. Instead the cities of Koile Syria had to be held, and so they had to be strengthened, fortified, and garrisoned, and their defences had to be installed to block the approaches to the cities. Tyre and Sidon were evidently already well fortified while Demetrios held them until 288. These two effectively blocked the coastal road between the Lebanon Mountains and the sea and probably Byblos and Tripolis to the north of Sidon were also strong enough to withstand attack for time. In the inland area 'behind' the Lebanon Mountains and south in Palestine, however, much work needed to be done.

In Palestine, new cities were founded at strategic positions. The old city of Ake (Akko) was made over into Ptolemais by Ptolemy II, whose coins were minted there from 261 BC[15]—the refoundation was thus in the 260s. This work involved a considerable enlargement of the city, so that the old city became regarded as the acropolis. The enlargement tripled the city's size and included the building of formidable walls whose line and much of whose construction survived to defy Napoleon almost two thousand years later.[16] The city, as its dynastic name indicates, was the centre of Ptolemaic government for, at least, Palestine,[17] though it is likely that the

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[15] Schurer, II.122.

[16] R. Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine, Settlement Patterns and City Planning, 337–31 B.C.E.*, BAR S 485, Oxford 1989, 16–20.

[17] The main source for Palestine at this period is the papyrus collection made by Zenon, published in sections as *P. Zenon*; V. Tcherikower, 'Palestine under the Ptolemies', *Mizraim* IV–V, 1937, 9–90; Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, ch. 2.

Phoenician area and Damascus had their own governors. Certainly there was a Ptolemaic official in Damascus later when Antiochos III attacked and captured the city.[18] Further south along the coast, Dor, another old urban site, had been fortified in the Persian period (and before),[19] and no doubt the all-important Gaza had its walls strengthened, though excavations there have not located much Hellenistic work.[20] These places will have had their walls demolished in Ptolemy I's time, perhaps more than once; reconstruction and expansion no doubt followed his reacquisition.

Inland a new city was founded at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee and given the name of Ptolemy II's sister, Philotera. This was planted on a well-protected site, between the lake on one side and the two streams which unite south of the lake to form the Jordan River—the site was therefore effectively an island.[21] Not far away to the south Skythopolis was also founded in Ptolemy II's time at the site of the town of Beth Shean, as was, on the other side of the Jordan, Philadelphia at the site of Rabbat Amana;[22] both were well-fortified and both controlled major routes, Skythopolis near a crossing of the Jordan; Philadelphia athwart the King's Highway. All of these places occupied sites of pre-existing and pre-Alexander settlement, though this is hardly significant, for Palestine was a long-occupied and settled land, so that one could scarcely avoid an earlier settlement wherever building took place. More important is the fact that they dominated the major routes through the country and that they all seem to have been founded or enlarged or fortified during Ptolemy II's reign.

In the hills, of course, there was Jerusalem, fortified from the Persian period, and to the north Samaria was a fortified city. Elsewhere in Palestine there are indications of other fortified sites smaller than these major sites. Strato's Tower, Athlit, Ashdod, Ashkelon on the coast were certainly equipped with walls in the Ptolemaic period; inland there were other places similarly fortified, but not with sufficient strength to do more than deter bandits and minor armies. When faced, later in the third century, by a well-equipped Seleukid army, they mainly fell with little delay. Nevertheless it seems clear that a major effort was put into the defences of the

[18] Polyainos, *Stratagems*, 4.15.
[19] Arav, *Hellenistic Palestine*, 12–15.
[20] Ibid. 49.
[21] Ibid. 97–98 and figs. 69–71.
[22] Ibid. 99–100 and fig. 72.

major cities, and all of many smaller places also.[23] The territory east of the Jordan River had been partly settled by Macedonians in the years after Alexander's death. Gerasa claimed to have been founded by Perdikkas, and so in 323–321; Pella and Abila had names suggesting a Macedonian presence; Rabbat Amana was refounded as Philadelphia, whose name indicates foundation in the 260s or 250s. The whole scheme dotted the country with fortified cities, which were both defensive in themselves and dominated the major routes.

There were three possible invasion routes southwards out of Seleukid Syria: the coast road, the route up the Orontes along the Bekaa valley, and the route along the eastern, desert, side of the Antilebanon. The first of these was blocked by the long sequence of fortified Phoenician cities—Byblos, Tripolis, Sidon, Tyre—and by frequent narrow chokepoints where the road could be easily blocked. The eastern route lay effectively in desert country; apart from the difficulty of travel in such territory, it ended at the fortified city of Damascus; from there Palestine was accessible across the Golan, from which entry into Palestine was made difficult by the marshes of the Jordan Valley, or by moving directly south, along the King's Highway, but this was blocked by fortified cities such as Philadelphia, and where the crossings of the Jordan were dominated by such fortified places as Philotera and Skythopolis.

The central route, the Bekaa Valley, was no easier. In the early Hellenistic period, the valley was only thinly populated, so that an invader had to transport his own supplies. Diversion to either east or west for much of the way was blocked by the mountain ranges, through which routes were few and difficult. At the southern end of the valley there were three routes which could be taken: along the Litani River to the coast north of Tyre, along the Barada River east towards Damascus, or south along the Nahr el-Hasbani and into the Jordan's upper valley, an easily defended gorge. None of these routes was easy, and all used difficult gorges through the mountains—indeed the Hasbani route is effectively unusable, and no army in the ancient world ever seems to have tried it. The two other routes, of course, led through gorges to the fortified cities of Damascus and Tyre. At least this central route avoided some of the difficulties of either the coastal or desert roads, though it had difficulties of its own. The northern part of the Bekaa was a near desert at the time; the most

[23] See Arav (note 19) for the evidence.

populated part of the valley was the southern section, and it was just in front of this part that a fortified area, between Gerrha and Brochoi was constructed to block the way.

This is, in fact, only attested by Polybios in his account of the invasion by Antiochos III in 219,[24] but it is obvious that the fortified zone existed long before then, and the period of Ptolemy II is the most likely time for its construction, along with other works such as the fortification of Ake and Philadelphia and other places. The position was very carefully chosen, shielding the most populated part of the Bekaa from Seleukid attacks, and at the same time preventing access from the north to all three of the routes leading further southwards. Gerrha (later Chalkis, the modern Anjarr) was close to the head of the route through the Barada Gorge towards Damascus, and the Litani and Hasbani routes were well to the south. The lines were sufficiently deterring for Antiochos III to be stopped once, and for him on his second invasion to be compelled to climb through the Lebanon range to continue his attack; he avoided the area altogether on his third attack, preferring the desert route. These lines were, in fact, never directly assaulted, always bypassed, and always with much difficulty.

Ptolemy II, therefore, not only built up his navy, but he invested heavily in the systematic fortification of the whole of Phoenicia and Palestine. Such work was clearly felt to be essential if both Koile Syria and Egypt were to be properly defended, but, like the ships, the fortifications had to be manned. This required a permanent army of a substantial size. The problem then was that the more fortifications there were, the more troops were needed to hold them, and the fewer men were available to form the field army. Of course, the inhabitants of the cities and towns could be expected to turn to and defend themselves, though it was exactly from such men that the army was in part recruited—hence the continuous recruitment of settlers, and of mercenaries in emergencies. The size of the navy also meant that many men would be absorbed into the ships—though here it appears that native Egyptians were accepted as sailors where they were (at least between 312 and 219) excluded from the army. It is likely that the navy declined in size fairly substantially in the second half of the third century for the very reason that it soaked up so many men. The Ptolemies could never afford to mount a major joint army-and-navy campaign.

24 Polybios 5.42.

The army of Ptolemy I and his son lacked one element which was seen as essential by all contemporary commanders—trained war-elephants. Ptolemy and Seleukos had been driven to inventive tactics at the Battle of Gaza in 312 to counter Demetrios' elephant force: after that battle Ptolemy captured 43 of Demetrios' elephants.[25] The strength of the Seleukid army in elephants was notorious, and could be said to be one of the major foundations of the Seleukid king's power. It was the great elephant herd acquired by Seleukos I in India which was the basis of his victory at Ipsos,[26] and it was Antiochos I's sixteen elephants which brought him the decisive victory over the Galatians in Asia Minor.[27] There can be no doubt that he had also used those elephants in the First Syrian War against Ptolemy II; Apameia, the city Seleukos had founded only two days' march north of the Ptolemaic boundary in Syria became the Seleukid centre for army training, with elephant stables.[28] Coins of the city show elephants more frequently than any other Syrian city.[29]

Ptolemy had an uncertain number of these beasts. Up to thirty were displayed in the great *Pompe* in 275, twenty-four being used to pull chariots, and probably four were used to haul a statue of Alexander.[30] But, whereas Antiochos was in contact with India, through Baktria, whence he could acquire more supplies—as he did by way of the satrap of Baktria in 274,[31] Ptolemy was not. Antiochos' kingdom lay across the land route to the east, and the sea routes between Egypt and India was not yet available, at least not for such a difficult cargo as live elephants. The elephants Ptolemy had were therefore in all likelihood the survivors of those he had captured at the battle of Gaza, plus a few more recently acquired. From 274 at the latest any new supply out of India was closed off and, if those beasts in 275 were really survivors of Gaza, they were by that time very old.

With the energy which was characteristic of him, Ptolemy set to work to develop his own independent source of supply. The old canal

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[25] Diod. 19.83.2 and 84.4.

[26] Diod. 20.113.4; Plut., *Demetrios* 28.3.

[27] Lucian, *Zeuxis*, 11.

[28] Strabo 16.7.10

[29] E.T. Newell, *The Coinage of the Western Seleucid Mints*, 2nd ed., rev. O. Mørkholm, New York 1977, 156.

[30] Athenaios 5.203b.

[31] Sachs and Hunger, –274.

which connected the Nile with the Red Sea was renovated, beginning in 270/269,[32] and naval expeditions were sent south along the sea. Ports were founded, or revived, along the African coast of the Red Sea at Myos Hormos, at Leukos Limen, from which an old road led across the desert to Thebes, and at Berenike, on a parallel with the southern frontier posts at the first cataract. These two southern ports, in fact, had their positions dictated partly by geography and partly by the Red Sea climate, since southerly winds usually fail north of Leukos Limen (modern Kosseir). Ptolemy himself led an expedition south along the Nile past the first cataract into Nubia, partly to drive of Nubians who had attacked Elephantine, the southern post, and partly to establish control of the tract along the river to the south, the Dodekaschoenos.[33] The naval expeditions established posts further south along the Red Sea coast, at Philotera and Ptolemais—this last was nicknamed Ptolemais-of-the-Elephant-Hunts—and at Adulis, from which contact could be made with the developing society on the Ethiopian highlands. (Note the use of the royal family names, a good sign that the places were newly founded.) The elephants were captured during expeditions inland, taken to the coast, transported in specially built ships to Berenike and Leukos Limen in the northern part of the sea, marched across the desert to the Nile about Thebes, then along the river by ship to the permanent elephant camp near Memphis.[34] Then they had to be trained, by 'Indians', who were either specially recruited Indian mahouts, or Africans who had learned the skills: 'Indian' became the term for all mahouts.[35]

In the 270s, therefore, and presumably once again in large part as a result of his experience during the First Syrian War and in his development competition with Antiochos, Ptolemy II undertook three complementary tasks: the expansion of his navy until it comprised eventually at least 300 ships; the foundation of new cities and the fortification of old cities throughout Phoenicia and Palestine; a series of elephant hunt expeditions and the transportation of the captured animals from the coast of Eritrea and Sudan to Egypt, a task which included the re-excavation of the old Nile-Red Sea canal, the establishment of a fleet of warships and

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[32] Diod. 1.33.11–13; Pliny *NH*, 6.26.165–167; Pithom Stele (note 1).
[33] Diod. 1.37.5; Agatharchides of Knidos, fr. 20.
[34] Diod. 3.36.3–5 and 37.7–8; Strabo 17.1.45.
[35] On all to do with elephants see H.H. Scullard, *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World*, London 1974.

specialized transport vessels in the Red Sea ports, and the establishment and construction of several new ports on the African coast; and an expedition of conquest into Nubia.

This was an enormously expensive programme. Ptolemy I had been rich, but had not pursued policies of such an expensive and expansive extent as those contrived by his son. Some of these African expeditions did produce goods which were saleable, such as gold and ivory,[36] but the expense of getting them was far greater than the product. (Control of the Red Sea also permitted trade with South Arabia, which produced incenses, and spices were available in East Africa and South Arabia, and coastal voyages could be made to India. But these luxury goods were already available to the land trade conducted by the Nabataeans; no doubt Ptolemy could make a profit on the trade, but he was as likely to hand out gifts of quantities of incense as part of his diplomacy.)

In order to finance this great programme of construction and development Ptolemy II had to implement internal policies within Egypt which were designed to extract the maximum possible wealth from the working population. Systems for doing just that had existed in Egypt since at least the fourth millennium BC, and Ptolemy I before him (and Alexander and Kleomenes of Naukratis) did not greatly alter the governing and taxing systems in place when they took over. But during the reign of Ptolemy II two major new elements emerged which affected the old system. The first was the international situation which required Ptolemy to build up both his army and his navy, especially the competition with the Seleukid kings. The second element was the immigration of a substantial number of Greeks and others into Egypt. These men were recruited partly as soldiers, and partly as administrators. The soldiers in particular were settled on estates throughout the country as landlords, and even farmers; the bureaucrats also became ubiquitous.

The country was already organized bureaucratically, with a view to administration by a central authority. This organisation, into villages, districts, and regions—*komai*, toparchies, nomes—was ages old. Onto this system were imposed the Greek settlers, cleruchs. They were provided with estates of varying sizes, and out of the produce they were to support themselves, hold themselves ready to be embodied as active soldiers at need, and pay taxes. Some of these men worked their estates themselves; others employed Egyptians; others lived on the rents collected from their

[36] Gold: Diod 3.17.1–3; Ivory: S.M. Burstein, 'Ivory and Ptolemaic Exploration of the Red Sea: the Missing Factor', *Topoi* 6, 1996, 799–807.

tenants. They constituted in effect an armed and ready garrison, ready at the government's behest either to suppress internal dissent or to campaign abroad. Another great royal investment was to create an artificial lake at the Fayum region which permitted a great local expansion of irrigated land, and the foundation of a dozen or so new towns, whose names, such as Philoteris and Philadelphia, are signs of the time of their foundation.[37]

Extracting taxes was the essential function of the bureaucracy. At the village level were komarchs, usually Egyptians, local headmen who might be elected by the villagers, or imposed by the local *rentier*. At this level the essential task, from the government's point of view, was to assess the crop-potential of the village lands after the annual Nile inundation. This was the basis for the calculation of the taxes expected from the village, the collection of which was then bid for by tax farmers, who paid for the right to collect the actual taxes, in kind, from the villages. So the tax farmers formed one bureaucratic system. A second comprised the royal officials whose function was to check both the accuracy of the nomarch's crop assessment, and the tax collecting activities of the tax farmers. The Greek cleruchs came under a separate administration, under a *strategos*, since their payments were different, and were directed differently. In addition there was a whole series of other taxes, on salt and oil for example, the collection and sale of which were government monopolies, and so administered by yet more bureaucracies.[38] The bureaucracies were overwhelmingly staffed by Greeks, since the operating language of government was Greek.

The elaboration of this system, if such a word may be used of a collection of competing authorities, was due to the demands of Ptolemy II's expansionist international policies, and, at root, to his need to be able to defend his territories against any Seleukid attack; meanwhile the Seleukid kingdom was also developing its strength, though in a different way. The Ptolemaic scheme was, in fact, less a system and more a series of decisions made in response to problems. There seems to have been no overall design, and no basic structure, within which these decisions were taken. So the old interpretation, that the Ptolemaic government controlled every

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37 Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 62–63.

38 All books on Egypt and the Hellenistic world have accounts of Ptolemaic government: Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, ch. 2, Turner in *CAH* VII, 1, 133–158, and especially C. Préaux, *L'Economie Royale des Lagides*, Paris 1938, and *Le Monde Hellénistique*, Paris 1978 and 1988; see also J. Bingen, *Hellenistic Egypt*, London 2007.

aspect of the economy, and that Egypt was run as a sort of royal Soviet system with the king supervising every detail, has given away to the assumption that the king's interventions and decrees and exhortations were actually repeated attempts, in some cases ineffectual attempts, to influence events within the country. That is, the Ptolemaic government is now perceived as being as little in control of its country and subjects as most other ancient states. This is as misleading an interpretation as the 'in full control' idea; we must pitch our notion somewhere in between, noting particularly that the aim was the collection of taxation above all, not royal control of the economy as such.[39]

Nevertheless for centuries the various expedients produced the money. The Egyptian government was always enormously wealthy. The squeeze was put on by Ptolemy II by his deliberate expansion of the bureaucracy and the creation of monopolies, and the detailed settlement of cleruchs throughout the country. But the money was spent as he acquired it, on his great navy, his Red Sea elephant hunts, his fortifications and city building—and his wars. It is my contention here that it was the experience of the First Syrian War, in which he was attacked by his half-brother from Cyrenaica, by Antiochos I from Syria, and faced a nasty Galatian mutiny within Egypt, which drove him to these policies, which amounted to a policy of developing military and financial strength as a means of defending the empire he had inherited. It was the continuous flow of riches which Egypt produced which allowed him to put into practice those international projects.

This programme of wealth collection, political expansion, and armaments build-up made Ptolemaic Egypt the Mediterranean superpower of the mid-third century BC This had not been its position in Ptolemy I's time, as his conduct of the final war with Antigonos showed; and even at the beginning of the reign of his son, in 283/282, the crisis of the war between Seleukos and Lysimachos was resolved without Ptolemy's participation—in part thanks to the dynastic paralysis caused by the transfer of the throne from Ptolemy I to Ptolemy II in 284–282, and the problems caused by that, and partly by the existence of other possible claimants, but also because the royal mind-set of Ptolemy I was defensive, and always had been, and this was fully accepted by his son; indeed it was probably why Ptolemy I chose Philadelphos as his successor in preference to his eldest son Keraunos, for the 'Thunderer' would surely be

[39] See especially the essays in Bingen (previous note) for a development of the change.

aggressive, plunging the Macedonian kingdoms into another round of wars, and would probably end by presiding over the destruction of all Ptolemy I's work. Philadelphos, by contrast, was as defensive from the start as his father. From the 270s, however, he was very clearly the major power, as Antiochos faced his own succession problems and the Galatian invasions. By developing his fleet in particular Ptolemy II indicated his intention to maintain his ability to project that power anywhere he chose, but his policy was always aimed at holding what he had.

By fortifying the Palestinian and Phoenician cities Ptolemy II indicated his intention to hold what his father had gained; by developing an independent supply of elephants he was attempting to detach himself from any possible dependence on supply through the Seleukid lands; by building his navy he was developing a force which was essentially defensive. A fleet was not generally in the ancient world an instrument of aggression, but an Egyptian fleet was certainly a deterrent to aggression by others, particularly since its bases included Cyprus and the Aegean. It was, therefore, an instrument designed to keep enemies at a distance from Egypt, the essential heartland of the state. Its use, by such expeditions as those into the Black Sea and the western Mediterranean, also signalled to all that Ptolemy was the great power of the age—and his contradictory policies in the west, of friendship with everyone, was another mark of the local superpower, in which such power could accommodate the contradictions because everyone wished to be his friend.

The papyri found in Egypt have allowed historians to study the administration of the Ptolemies in detail and to develop and revise and criticize their theories. This is hardly possible with the Seleukid kingdom, though a reasonably comprehensive theory may be developed, even if it is based on different and much less detailed information.[40] The clue to the administration of the Seleukid kingdom seems to lie in the actions of Seleukos I in 300–299 in founding the series of great and medium-sized cities in northern Syria. This action effectively divided the newly acquired land into city-states, and these, as usual, largely administered themselves. The contrast with Ptolemaic policy is stark, and as more and more cities were

[40] M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, Oxford 1953, contains much information but no overall theory; more recently M. Aperghis, *The Seleukid Economy*, Cambridge, 2005, is clear and well organised. The lack of surviving detail concerning government policies is the real drawback.

founded in other parts of the Seleukid kingdom, the contrast became steadily greater. So as early as the year 300 the two kingdoms were set on diverging internal political courses.

This does not mean that the new cities were independent, nor that they were ever intended to be true city-states. The layouts of the several cities make it quite clear that all of them included an acropolis, though citadel is perhaps the better term since it implies something military. These structures were in fact all positioned on the edges of the cities, allowing connection to the outside distinct from the city themselves, and so they were not liable to be besieged or taken over by the inhabitants; they were, that is to say, wholly under royal domination.

The four greater cities of the Seleukis may be taken as examples. The king's name city, Seleukeia-in-Pieria, on the coast, was provided with an artificial harbour, and the citizens appear to have concentrated on the lower land close to that harbour; high on the hill overlooking the civilian area was the acropolis, which either contained or was next to the royal necropolis and the city's main temple, built in the latest revived-Doric style. Seleukeia's neighbour Antioch was laid out beside the Orontes River, and the civilian settlement was concentrated in the land between the river and the neighbouring hill; the summit of that hill was occupied by the well-fortified acropolis. Laodikeia-ad-Mare, like Seleukeia, was provided with an artificial harbour (still in use), but there was a citadel on the northeast corner of the city plan, with the civilian area concentrated between the harbour and the acropolis. At Apameia, the citadel occupied the old tell, and the city was laid out beside it on lower land. In the civilian area below the acropolis there were all the usual institutions of the Greek or Macedonian city—the *boule*, an assembly area for the *demos*, a market controlled by an elected *agoranomos*, and so on. All officials were elected by the citizens, and all these and more are attested for several of the cities by official inscriptions. Yet it is clear from the repetitive geography of the cities—and the above descriptions can be applied to all the other cities founded by the Seleukid family—that it was the king and his government which was in ultimate control, even of the internal affairs of many of the cities. In every case the cities were technically self-governing, but actually were under royal control, and the citadels were garrisoned by royally-commanded soldiers.

The means by which Seleukid control was exercised was not in fact as brutal as the city layouts of apparently opposed city-and-acropolis might suggest. They key Seleukid institution was in fact that of the *epistates*, a man who occupied an intermediary position between king and city.

One of the king's Friends, he was often a native of the city to which he was attached. It was his purpose to interpret the city to the king and the king to the city. Both could therefore expect their words to be heard and accommodated. As a king's Friend the *epistates* had the king's ear; as a native of the city he was accessible locally. He could also, as a king's Friend, influence, or even command, the officers of the garrison on the acropolis. Such men are attested several times in Syria, but not elsewhere, though they may have existed in other cities. They were one of the elements which made the Seleukid system of government operate.

Seleukos' city-founding was a successful policy. It was imitated and extended by Antiochos I during his time as joint-king and viceroy of the eastern provinces—known by the Seleukid administrators as the Upper Satrapies—where he founded or refounded cities in Baktria and the nearby lands. Antiochos adopted the same policy in Asia Minor when he became sole king, and this was the land which preoccupied his attention and energies for most of his reign after his father's death. The Galatians had created much confusion in the 270s, and when they were finally defeated it remained necessary to erect defences against their continued tendency to go raiding. They settled in north-central Anatolia, in what had been western Kappadokia, and in such a position that they prevented Antiochos from resuming his attempts to enforce his authority on the line of states—Bithynia, Herakleia, Pontos—along the Black Sea coast. The Bithynian king who brought the first Galatian group across the Bosporos could therefore congratulate himself on a successful *coup*—he eliminated both the threat from Antiochos and from his own rival brother through them.

This policy of favouring the foundation and development of cities was, of course, a larger version of what had happened in Macedon in the time of Philip II, during which Seleukos had grown up. But it also fitted well with the situation in Asia Minor, where the coastal lands of the west (the Aegean coast) and the south were already heavily urbanized. Seleukos and Antiochos could therefore pose as *polis*-friendly kings, contrasting this with the domineering and financially onerous policies of the Ptolemies. In a way it was also an inheritance from the policies towards the Greek cities of Antigonos and Demetrios, though these kings had a tendency to demand rather more subservience than the Seleukids.

The battles against the Galatians had, however, been aimed mainly at defending two geographical parts of Anatolia: the cities of the Aegean coast, and the old Royal Road which connected that region with Syria and the eastern lands. Many of the cities testified to their gratitude to

Antiochos for his work in inscriptions and statues of the king, and the continuing, if diminished, threat of Galatian attack kept them firmly on his side, and willing to defend themselves. This reduced the need for garrisons to be placed in the cities, which was a counter-productive policy by which resentment at royal pretensions could easily grow. The cities were usually already well-fortified, and very few were seriously threatened with capture by the raiders even at the height of their power—though their *chorai* were subject to serious ravaging. The Royal Road, however, was vulnerable, especially after the Galatians settled in Kappadokia, since the road ran along their southern borders. Antiochos founded a series of new cities along that road, more or less a day's march apart, garrisoned and fortified, with settlers planted inside. Several of these were existing urban centres refounded, as was Apameia, which had been Antigonos' satrapal centre of Kelainai. To the west along the valley of the Maiandros, Tralles was refounded as another Seleukeia, and Nysa as another Antiocheia, and a group of four cities occupied the river's upper valley. To the east of Apameia were Lysias and Philomelion, both founded by the family of the original Lysias, and Antiocheia and Laodikeia Katakekaumene. The renaming of existing cities also implied their subjection to Seleukid power and policy. This was not an urbanisation on the scale of the cities in Syria—some of the 'new' cities were reinforced and enlarged and revived urban centres—but at least seven or eight new cities were established, as well as those which were fortified or refortified. The whole scheme existed to defend the road and the connection it represented between western Asia Minor and Syria and the east.[41]

This policy succeeded in establishing Seleukid control over the long overland approach to Ionia, but relations with the Ionian cities were a different matter. Each of them had its individual government, most of them were at least in formal terms democracies, and most had traditions of considerable independence going back a very long way, for even under Persia they had been largely autonomous. And yet the cities were in many ways well habituated to royal influence, even royal control. The Persian Empire had dominated them for two centuries, and then Alexander and Antigonos had done the same. The independence with which the cities acted had been limited for a long time, and in the new world of great kingdoms competing for influence, their room for manoeuvre was not great, though it did exist.

[41] A.H.M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1971, 44–45.

Then there was also the matter of the king's relationship with the lords in Anatolia. Several men had succeeded in the period since Alexander in establishing themselves as lords of parts of the country. In a way the kings of Bithynia and Pontos were the most obvious of these rulers, but there were others in the western and southern parts of the interior which were almost as independent. In Pergamon was Philetairos, a former functionary of Lysimachos who had deftly switched to supporting Seleukos, and had carefully continued to support his son. In the process he had established himself in near independence, and in control of a substantial treasure which had been Lysimachos'. In the south were men such as Olympichos and Eupolemos in Karia, or, in the interior Lysias and Themison. Some of these men had planted themselves in fortified cities, or had founded new cities named for themselves (Lysias, Philomelion, Themisonion, Dokimeion). They had not taken royal titles, but might well do so given the chance. Their purpose was, naturally, to survive and to prosper, and they were happy to submit to any king so long as that king left them in peace to enjoy their lands and their wealth and local power.

This mixture of cities on the coast, the royally dominated road, and great estates controlled by semi-independent lords, was one which had in essentials already existed during the Persian regime,[42] and continued to exist during the Roman and Byzantine empires. The presence of the threatening Galatians only emphasized the independence of some areas and the semi-independence of others. The importance of such local lords in the Seleukid scheme for Asia Minor is illustrated by the family of Akhaios. This man is described as 'lord of the district' in an inscription of 268 / 267.[43] He was probably a younger son of Seleukos I, in which case he was awarded a large estate presumably in order to insert a royal presence among the other 'lords of districts'. His family married into that of the Attalids of Pergamon and that of the Seleukid kings (which is a powerful argument for Akhaios' own royal birth).

With kings, lords, cities, and Galatians, Asia Minor was a difficult and complicated place for any king to govern, and it is hardly surprising that Antiochos I had to spend much of his reign dealing with it and

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42 J.M. Cook, *The Persian Empire*, Oxford 1983, 176–182.

43 M. Wörrle, 'Antiochos I, Achaios der Altëre und die Galater', *Chiron* 5, 1975, 59–87. The theory of Akhaios as a son of Seleukos I is not wholly accepted, it must be said, though I like it. To say that it is 'unpersuasive' as a theory, as Ogden, *Polygamy*, does, is itself unpersuasive without discussion.

its problems. It was also quite reasonable to find that the Cold War competition between Ptolemy II and Antiochos I was partly played out along the coasts of Asia Minor, among those same lands and cities. The naval expedition into the Black Sea launched by Ptolemy was one of those items of competition.

Even the fairly superficial account of Asia Minor given here makes it quite clear that it was a very different society from that of Syria. The rest of the Seleukid state contained similarly different societies. Babylonia contained great ancient native cities which were scarcely affected by the Greek and Macedonian governors but were Seleukos I's earliest supporters and remained apparently content to be Seleukid subjects until the very end. Further east was the much divided land of Iran, parts of which had already become independent, and which was the scene of several city foundations, some new, some on older urban sites, mainly designed, like those in Asia Minor, to control the great Royal Road which connected Babylonia with Baktria. And at the end of that road was Baktria, which Alexander had barely conquered, and which Seleukos only controlled by appointing his son—the grandson of the Baktrian leader Spitamenes—as virtually independent king. It was, unlike the rest of the Iranian lands, a region which attracted a considerable Greek immigration, even though in geography and climate it was as different from Greece as Egypt was.

All this variety is a good reason why Seleukos I and Antiochos I made no attempt to fashion a Ptolemaic-like grip on their kingdom. It is quite unknown whether they ever considered such a solution to their administrative difficulties, but Seleukos had some familiarity with Egypt from his time there as a refugee, and he had a similarly densely populated and productive province in Babylonia where a detailed bureaucratic control could well have been applied. But such a policy was out of the question in the confusion which was Asia Minor, or in the barely suppressed antagonism of Iran and Baktria. In those areas it was essential to rule with a light hand, and so it was similarly required elsewhere in the kingdom. And this, of course, was as effective a governing technique as the bureaucratic heavy handedness of the Ptolemies.

Like Ptolemy, Seleukos had a great need for Greek immigration, but for a rather different reason. He needed soldier material, perhaps even more than Ptolemy, but he also needed families to populate the undeveloped areas of his kingdom, and that meant above all Syria. Certain types of Greeks would be attracted to Egypt, but Seleukos needed very many more, and he did not insist on educated men such as those who became Ptolemy's bureaucrats; Seleukos needed a wide cross-section of Greeks

who could populate his new cities, produce children to be recruited into his army, and pay taxes (willingly, for he did not have an extensive administration).

To attract such people he offered land to own, and cities to live in. This permitted the massive development in Syria and the deliberate and equally massive plantation of cities in other parts, from inner Asia Minor to the borders of India, and down to the shores of the Persian Gulf. It was the success of this policy which pushed Ptolemy II into the need for developing his kingdom's resources in ships and soldiers and money from about 270 onwards. The First Syrian War had thus shown him that the competition for Syria was a major challenge.

Ptolemy II's position as the dominating Mediterranean power meant that every development in the wide region from India to Spain was of interest or concern to him. He had diplomatic relations with Carthage,[44] and with Rome from 273,[45] his half-sisters had been married to Agathokles of Syracuse and Pyrrhos of Epiros,[46] and he had diplomatic contacts, of course, in the Black Sea. His alliance with Pyrrhos was firm enough, despite the early death of Eurydike, Pyrrhos' wife and Ptolemy's half-sister, for Ptolemy to loan a strong force of soldiers to safeguard Epiros while Pyrrhos was away in the west (the defence, of course, was against either the Galatians or Antigonos Gonatas, or both).[47] But Ptolemy became very entangled in this region, attempting to be friendly with everyone, in an area where mutual antagonisms were very strong. Pyrrhos' expedition to the west, to Italy and Sicily ended with his return to Epiros in 275. He was quickly involved in a new war in Greece which marginally involved Ptolemy, though his simultaneous conflict with Antiochos I in the First Syrian War was of greater immediate concern to him. Pyrrhos died in 272, leaving Antigonos triumphant.

This was an immediate threat to Ptolemy, for Antigonos could have turned his fleet on to Ptolemy's Aegean outposts, and the ending of the Greek war may well have been a major factor in his decision to make a peace without victory in the east. Antigonos was by now married to Antiochos' half-sister Phila, a recent enough union to be still a mark of

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[44] W. Huss, 'Die Bezeichungen zwischen Karthago und Agypten in hellenistischer zeit', *Ancient Society* 13, 1979, 119–137.

[45] Dionysios of Halicarnassos, *Roman Antiquities* 14.1–2; Livy, *Periochae* 14.

[46] Ogden, *Polygamy*, 70, with references. Neither girl lived long after marriage.

[47] N.G.L. Hammond, 'Which Ptolemy gave troops and stood as protection of Pyrrhos' kingdom?', *Historia* 37, 1988, 405–413.

a political alliance. By making peace, of course, Ptolemy freed himself to attend to the Aegean, and his naval expedition into the Black Sea, with its implied threat to Athens and Greece, followed the year after. In 268 he made alliances with Athens and Sparta.[48] Athens was already partly occupied by Macedonian forces, and other areas were threatened by them, so the Ptolemaic-Athenian alliance was overtly directed against Antigonos Gonatas, who had been extending his authority through Greece by occupying Euboia and supporting a series of local tyrants in the Peloponnese—where Sparta maintained its long antipathy towards tyranny. The war, called after the Athenian statesman Khremonides, whose aim was the narrow one of removing Macedonian power from Attika, began in 267.[49]

The preoccupation of Ptolemy with this war, which lasted until 261 or thereabouts, allowed the Seleukid king time to consolidate his position, particularly in Asia Minor. His victory over the Galatians assisted in this, but he also had to move fairly cautiously. There were many local political authorities in the region whch could not be removed without decades of warfare. Instead they were brought into relationships with Antiochos and his family, as allies, as subordinates, or as friends, or by any other process by which the situation could be rendered calm and secure. The result was that the Seleukid system of control in Asia Minor was as complex and essentially pragmatic as were the Ptolemaic tax-raising methods in Egypt.

Some of the Asia Minor dynasts had been as active against the Galatians as Antiochos himself, with perhaps an even more personal stake in the victory than the king, and had therefore become his junior allies. The family of Lysias, for example, had founded two cities in Phrygia (Lysias and Philomelion), was in the front line of the Galatian war, and had survived. The first of the family had been a general of Seleukos I in the 280s, and was therefore employed either by Seleukos or by Antiochos in the 270s;[50] the family can be traced for at least four generations, until 188, and perhaps on to the man who was regent of the kingdom in the 160s. Philetairos of Pergamon became Seleukos' ally before Koroupedion and

[48] Schmitt, no. 476 = Austin 61.

[49] Walbank in *CAH* VII, 1, 236–243; C. Habicht, *Athens from Alexander to Antony*, Cambridge MA 1997, 142–149; P. Palagia and S.W. Tracy, *The Macedonians in Athens*, Oxford 2003.

[50] R.A. Billows, *Kings and Colonists, Aspects of Macedonian Imperialism*, Leiden 1995, 99–100.

passed his power and position on to his nephew Eumenes I on his death in 263.[51] Akhaios similarly established a dynasty.[52] Karia was a region which fell under the control of a succession of dynasts, though none seems to have founded a dynasty. This had been the land of the family of the independent Persian satrap Mausollos until the conquests of Alexander, and since then Asandros, Pleistarchos (the brother of Kassander), and Eupolemos had exercised quasi-independent power in the region in succession. Eupolemos was dead by 280 at the latest, and had no successor in the region, it seems, either politically or personally. He had inherited the position as a subordinate of Pleistarchos, so hereditary succession was not necessarily involved. The situation was thus more of a military dictatorship than a kingship.[53] Some of the coastal regions of Karia were under Ptolemaic or Rhodian control, and it seems likely that the interior was under strong Seleukid influence, if not actual control, after Eupolemos disappeared. But in this area influence or control had to be exercised through the numerous cities, and each city had to be contacted and dealt with separately.[54] For the greater powers, if a land was not actually vital in a strategic sense, political division would be preferable to the emergence of a local strongman. But local division might also open the land to mutual competition between the greater powers, for such regions had a habit of suddenly seeming or becoming important, and were the obvious places in which inter-power competition could take place in times of peace.

These men were difficult enough to control, and ceased to be wholly reliable as allies once the menace of the Galatians had been reduced. Just as difficult, and much more numerous, were the cities strung along the Aegean coast. Here there were as many variations in the relationships between kings and cities as there were kings and cities. The king might exercise direct control or the city might be wholly independent; in between these extremes there were ways of showing partiality to a king, by rendering honours of various sorts, or for a king to claim influence, as by gifts. But the general situation was always one of considerable

[51] E.V. Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamum*, Ithaca 1947; R.B. McShane, *The Foreign Policy of the Attalids of Pergamum*, Urbana IL 1974, ch. 2; R.E. Allen, *The Attalid Kingdom, a Constitutional History*, Oxford 1983, ch. 2.

[52] Billows, *Kings and Colonists*, 96–99 and 110.

[53] Ibid, 93–94.

[54] For an indication of the complexity and of the source material available, if for a slightly later period see Ma, *Antiochos III*.

uncertainty, in which rival kings could advance their interests by small gains. In 288 or 279, for instance, Ptolemy II gave land to the city of Miletos, thus seducing the city from its former alignment with Antiochos.[55]

It will be seen that these dynasts varied considerably in power and authority. The Lysias-Philomelos family had already established a hereditary position by the 260s, though they cannot have acquired their lands before Seleukos' conquest in 282–281; and the Attalids in Pergamon were soon to do so as well, but the dynasts of Karia had not, though there was an apparent readiness in the area to accept the authority of a powerful man. There were also the kings along the north coast, whose titles might be royal, but whose positions were much the same as the non-royal dynasts. In the north-west were the kings of the Bithynians, first Zipoetes, and then his son Nikomedes. The monarchy was hereditary in the descendants of Zipoetes, but Nikomedes had had to fight for the kingship against his brother, and his son Ziaelas proved to be similarly impatient to inherit. To the east the kingdom of Pontos, strung along the Black Sea coast, was under the rule of a family descended from a former Persian satrap. It will have suffered from Galatian raids, but equally the establishment of the Galatians in Kappadokia interposed a formidable barrier between the Seleukid power along the royal road and the Pontic kingdom. It was protection of a sort.[56]

The Seleukid control of Asia Minor was thus by no means firm even after the Galatian victory and the foundation of the new cities. In particular King Ptolemy dominated the Aegean coast, and the northern regions had broken away into independence. Many of the cities in Karia were under his control or influence, and the Aegean generally was under his naval control, largely due to the alliance inherited with the Island League. The league had a *hegemon* appointed by Ptolemy, though this did not give him total control. Other islands were in Ptolemy's power as well—Chios, Samos, Thera. Itanos on the eastern end of Crete was developed as a Ptolemaic naval base from 268.[57] But Ptolemy's methods of control in the Aegean were as varied and difficult to categorize as those used by the Seleukids in Asia Minor.

The conflict between Ptolemy and Antigonos was one of the stimuli for the expansion of Ptolemy's influence—Thera and Itanos were acquired as Ptolemaic bases during the Khremonidean War, as was Methana on the

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[55] *I. Milet* 123, 37–40; Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 173.
[56] *CAH* VII, 11, 425–426, by H. Heinen, but extremely brief.
[57] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 40–43.

coast of Argolis. That war was mainly fought on land in Greece, leaving Ptolemy's naval power without its full effect—and Ptolemy did not wish to become too heavily engaged on land in Greece. By 261 Antigonos Gonatas had brought Athens to its knees, and had defeated Sparta. In the meantime Ptolemy had expanded his power in the Aegean, though this had no influence on the overall result of the war. Whereas Antigonos could be accounted as the victor in the war, Ptolemy had not been defeated. Both had expanded their power in Greece and the Aegean at the expense of several of the smaller states—and Antiochos have meanwhile done the same in Asia.

The vigour and activity of Ptolemy II are most impressive. His work in developing the resources of his kingdom, and in operating the network of diplomatic contacts, made him the key political force in the eastern Mediterranean for almost forty years. It was, however, the need to be prepared for a contest with the Seleukid kings which compelled him to all this activity. Even though his period of warfare with Antiochos I had only lasted for three years, it was the central event of his rule, and compelled him into the policy of increasing armaments and rigorous financial exactions. For Antiochos, on the other hand, it was less crucial, since both before and after he was largely preoccupied with attempting to bring order to Asia Minor: it is not a surprise that he had been at Sardis when Ptolemy's forces moved into Syria. Yet the underlying political reality remained, even for Antiochos, the mute contest for Koile Syria, and the need to prepare for it had been the engine which drove the policy of city founding and immigration. Since Seleukos I's hurt comment that he was Ptolemy's friend and would not fight him for Syria, that contest had been continuing, largely without fighting, but nevertheless it had been behind all the political manoeuvring of all four kings who reigned between 300 and 261 BC But by 261 Antiochos was dead, and the Ptolemaic-Seleukid peace of 271 no longer applied.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE SECOND SYRIAN WAR

The Second Syrian War is perhaps the least known of any of the series of these wars, even less known than the first war—'the most obscure decade of an obscure time', according to one historian.[1] The effects of the war were nevertheless considerable and are visible clearly enough. The fighting took place in Syria and Asia Minor—in other words, in those regions where Ptolemaic and Seleukid power rubbed up against each other directly—but also on the Aegean, where Rhodian and Antigonid naval power was involved. The war lasted for six or seven years, twice as long as the First War, and it had major effects in both kingdoms. No decisive result can be discerned, but the peace treaty which ended the war created the conditions for the next war.

The precise causes of this second war are not very easy to discern. It is reasonable to assume that both Antiochos I and Ptolemy II intrigued to undermine the other's position after the peace they made in 271, particularly in Asia Minor, where part of the territory of the future city of Stratonikeia in Karia was under Seleukid control in the reign of Antiochos I.[2] This was a significant political move into the sensitive area of inland Karia, where Ptolemy had control over several places along the coast. Both kings were careful not to compromise their honour by provoking a full-scale war. Much of this intrigue is invisible, though some items can be connected by hypothesis with the wider conflict of the Khremonideian War. The whole situation was in a precarious balance while Antiochos I lived—he had been born soon after 324, so was almost sixty years old in 265—and while Ptolemy II was involved in the war in the Aegean. But it all depended on restraint by the principals, the kings, and on the behaviour of their subordinates. The revolt of Magas in Cyrenaica in 275 had shown what the ambition of a subordinate could do. And Asia Minor was chock-full of men with similar ambitions.

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[1] W.W. Tarn, in *CAH* (ed. 1) VII, 711.
[2] *I. Stratonikeia*, 1030, cf. Ma, *Antiochos III*, 277.

The first serious change in the general situation came in 263, when Philetairos of Pergamon died. He was succeeded by his nephew Eumenes I.[3] Their principality was small, but it included the well-fortified city of Pergamon and the seaport of Elaia; and there probably still remained most of the treasure which Philetairos had originally been guarding for Lysimachos. Being subject to Seleukid overlordship was perfectly acceptable to Philetairos, but not to Eumenes, who insisted on his independence. At the same time it has to be noted that Philetairos had been assiduous in extending his influence throughout north-western Asia Minor, the areas of Mysia and Hellespontine Phrygia and along the shores of the Hellespont and the Propontis. He is known to have had friendly relations, assisted by gifts, with Kyzikos and Kyme, as well as acquiring the small port of Elaia. He was careful to give presents to Apollo at Delphi and at Delos, and to turn a hostile face to the Galatians, all of which activity promoted him as a friend of Greek freedom and values.

Eumenes' insistence on his independence makes it probable that Antiochos was the aggressor in the quarrel between them which followed Eumenes' accession, though he would probably not have put it that way. Eumenes I's defiance of Antiochos was both a development of Philetairos' policies and a break with them. At the same time sooner or later the Seleukid king would have had to take notice of the growth of Attalid power, which would seem to have outstripped that of any other of the dynasts in Seleukid Asia Minor. Eumenes' challenge to Antiochos I's authority led to a local war, and to a battle fought near the Seleukid viceregal city of Sardis. Eumenes, therefore, was taking pre-emptive action before Antiochos could gather his forces. In a long war, Antiochos was bound to win, so Eumenes' attack no doubt caught Antiochos short of troops in the immediate area. Eumenes was victorious, and presumably Antiochos agreed to a rapid peace, though we do not know why, possibly personal weariness—he was over sixty by now. Eumenes followed up his victory by issuing his own coins, settling mercenaries on his borders, and strengthening his ties with the nearby towns—that is, he was taking actions which marked him as a king, and was establishing his new kingship and his own overlordship, but without extending the territory he had inherited.[4]

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[3] Allen, *Attalid Kingdom*, 10–11.
[4] Strabo 13.4.2; Allen, *Attalid Kingdom*, 20–21.

There is no sign that Ptolemy was involved in the Pergamene crisis, though he was undoubtedly interested in its outcome. He was heavily involved at the time in the Khremonideian war, and could hardly risk a war with Antiochos as well.[5] It is, however, quite possible that the example of Eumenes had its effect on the problems Ptolemy himself soon faced in the same region. Even if he was not involved in the Pergamene crisis Ptolemy had certainly been actively intriguing in the same region. It seems that he had acquired control of Ephesos about 268,[6] for example, and a decree of the Ionian League of cities—less a political organization than a religious grouping—dated in the last years of Antiochos I, indicates by its wording that some of the cities were uneasy under the Seleukid king's distant authority;[7] the obvious *agent provocateur* would be either Ptolemy or Philetairos, but Philetairos seems to have been loyal to Antiochos, and the Ionian cities were well to the south of his lands and generally outside his range of influence. Ptolemy, on the other hand, had gained control of Miletos during the temporary Seleukid collapse in 280/279, and so had local power in Ionia.[8] Then, about 262/261, Ptolemy installed his eldest son, Ptolemy Epigonos ('the Son') as a viceroy in Ephesos. This came more or less at the end of the Aegean fighting in the Khremonidean War, which had ended in the defeat of his fleet by Antigonos at the battle of Kos,[9] and just after the defeat of Antiochos I by Eumenes.

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[5] W.W. Tarn, *Antigonos Gonatas*, Oxford 1913, 314, made a case for Eumenes being encouraged by Ptolemy, but it is not convincing; the only item of evidence he could find was a dedication by Eumenes at Delos, which he thought could only be done by Ptolemy's permission.

[6] *I. Labraunda* I, 114–120; Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 170.

[7] *OGIS* 222; see the comments by F. Piejko, 'Decree of the Ionian League in honor of Antiochos I, c. 267–262 BC', *Phoenix* 45, 1991, 126–147: he suggests that Ptolemy had made an attempt to take over the Ionian cities, and that this decree was passed in effect to apologise to Antiochos for the cities' wavering in their allegiance.

[8] *I. Milet* 139.7; changes in Miletos' allegiance are usually signalled by the adoption of a king as *stephanophoros*, a quasi-head of state; in 270/269 this was Antiochos, but not next year, when Ptolemy II was able to give land to the city: Welles *RC*, 22 = *OGIS* 227.

[9] The date of Kos is a notorious item of dispute: 261 or 255 are the main suggestions now: K. Buraselis, *Das hellenistische Makedonien und die Agäis. Forschungen zur Politik des Kassandros und der drei ersten antigoniden … im Agäischen Meer und in Westkleinasien*, Munchener Beitrage zur Papyrusforschung und Antiken Rechtsgeschichte 73, 1982 for 255; G. Reger, 'The Date of the Battle of Kos', *American Journal of Ancient History* 10, 1985, 155–177 for 261; both of these give extensive preceding references. It is not necessary here to discuss the issue, thankfully, since the argument for 261 seems rather the stronger, and it is not directly relevant to the Syrian wars.

Ptolemy Epigonos is assumed to be a son of Philadelphos, in fact the king's eldest son, who had been co-king since about 267, and had so appeared in the official documents.[10] His appointment as ruler at Ephesos is unexplained.[11] On the surface it was not necessary, but it may have been an attempt to give him some independent authority at some distance from the royal court (rather as it was Seleukid practice to appoint the heir to the kingship to govern in Central Asia), and to emphasize Ptolemaic power in the region in the aftermath of the defeat at Kos and in the Khremonideian war generally. The geopolitical effect of his appointment, however, was to detach Ephesos somewhat from the Ptolemaic empire, which was dangerous in the new context of the conflict of Ptolemy II and Antiochos II.

It may perhaps be assumed that Antiochos I could not reply, either to his defeat by Eumenes, or to Ptolemy's intrigues in Ephesos, because he was unable to do so, due to age and perhaps illness. He died in June 261, in Babylon.[12] His heir was his second son, Antiochos II (his eldest son, Seleukos, had been executed for some unknown transgression several years before). Antiochos II had ruled the eastern provinces (as Antiochos I and the executed Seleukos had done) during the co-regency. He presumably had to travel from the east on learning of his father's death, so the situation in Asia Minor was probably unfamiliar to him when he reached the area. It seems unlikely that he would have reached Asia Minor before the spring of 260.

The tension apparent in the Asia Minor region developed into war between Antiochos and Ptolemy during 260 and 259. The actual date of the outbreak is unknown, but it is clear that there were a succession of events in those years which promoted hostilities. The presence of Ptolemy Epigonos in Ephesos was one spark to the conflict. In 260 or 259 he rebelled against his father with the support of his mercenary soldiers. His partner, or his promoter, was Timarchos, an Aitolian mercenary commander who controlled Miletos and now made himself tyrant of that city and took over the island of Samos by a *coup de main*. Ptolemy Epigonos was soon killed by his soldiers;[13] he is no longer noted as co-

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[10] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 44.

[11] This involves equating Ptolemy in the Egyptian official documents with 'Ptolemy of Ephesos' mentioned by Athenaios 13.593b and 'the Son' mentioned in an inscription from Miletos (*I. Milet* 1.3.239 = Welles, *RC* 14). Further identifications (with the son of Ptolemy Keraunos or Ptolemy Andromachou) seem too remote to be accepted.

[12] Sachs and Hunger –261.

[13] Trogus, *Prol.* 26; Frontinus, *Stratagems* 3.2.11.

king in Egypt from the year 259, which may be the date of his rebellion, or, more likely, of his death. Since Ptolemy II was in possession of Ephesos a year or so later we may assume that the son's death led virtually at once to the recovery of the city by Ptolemaic forces—perhaps the mercenaries who killed the son did so in order to return to Ptolemaic service. However, Antiochos II seized the opportunity to remove Timarchos, to the relief of the Milesians, who awarded the king the epithet 'Theos' as a result.[14] In the process Antiochos gained control of a strip of coastland which had belonged to Samos, but not the island, which reverted to Ptolemaic control.[15]

The dating for these events is during the years 261–259; the order of events is the problem. Since the relationship between Ptolemy Epigonos and Timarchos is said to be an alliance,[16] it is best to separate their fates; so Ptolemy's rebellion occurred during 260 to 259, when he was removed from the official lists in Egypt; Timarchos' actions were in the same period but probably lasted some time longer. We have to assume that Philadelphos' reply was concentrated on recovering Ephesos and punishing his son's rebellion, and that Antiochos II was therefore able to attack Miletos without interruption; the support of the citizens was no doubt crucial. But his action, at least once the immediate crisis was over, could only be seen as a Seleukid attack on a Ptolemaic city; it was at this point that war began.

This confused and confusing situation is typical of the source material which exists for the Second War. All too often the sources are independent of precise context and date, and bringing them into relationship with each other is very difficult, and always speculative. I will present here a version of the history of the war which seems to include all the details which exist, but there is no guarantee that this is accurate; as is often remarked in the context of the third century BC, one more item, a papyrus, an inscription, a coin, can force a whole rethink.

The beginning of the war is to be seen in the crisis at Ephesos, but it did not actually move from an internal Ptolemaic crisis to a war between the two kingdoms until Antiochos II moved in to suppress the tyranny of Timarchos at Miletos. The second Syrian War therefore began in 259. But this war, of course, came about as a result of more than the problems of Ephesos and Miletos.

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14 App. *Syr.*, 65.
15 *I. Milet* 1.3.139; Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 81.
16 Trogus, *Prol.* 26.

The continuing tensions between the two great powers were heightened with the death of Antiochos I, since that meant the expiry of the peace treaty of 271. Intrigues to shift the allegiance of one or other city between the two powers will have been constant in the same area. From this period there are inscriptions, dated to the time of 'King Antiochos', which could be either Antiochos I or II, from Erythrai in Ionia, and Lysimacheia on the Hellespont, as well as the decree of the League of the Ionians mentioned earlier, all of which imply that any city along the eastern Aegean might be the object of intrigues.[17] One of the surprises of this war was the participation of Rhodes on the Seleukid side,[18] for the city was normally a friend and ally of Ptolemy. This is to be seen as one of the fruits of the intrigues in the years before the war's outbreak. This war, like all the others, has to be seen as a violent phase of the continuing conflict of the two dynasties, with other powers enlisted as needed, and as those others saw advantage in participation.

The focus of the war, however, quickly moved from Ionia to Syria. There are several items of evidence which suggest that Ptolemy was able to make some progress in an attack on Syria and Kilikia. Here the evidence is largely numismatic. A hoard of Ptolemaic gold coins has been found near Daphne, close to Antioch in Syria. They are dated between 261 and 259.[19] This is an unusually rich hoard. The Ptolemaic kingdom and empire operated a closed monetary system, so the coins could only have reached their hiding place by the hand of a Ptolemaic subject, and since they were gold coins it may be assumed that that Ptolemaic subject was also a Ptolemaic official. It is therefore assumed that a section of Ptolemy's army was at large in the area when the hoard was buried, and that the hoard was part of the treasury of the army; its burial, of course, implies a hasty Ptolemaic departure. In Kilikia another hoard has been found at the ancient site of Kelenderis. The date of this deposit seems to be about 258 or 257.[20] The fact that these were buried hoards, of course, implies that their owners were facing an emergency. If we may assume that a Ptolemaic force was operating in each area, we have also to assume

[17] Erythrai: *OGIS* 223 = Welles, *RC* 15; Lysimacheia: *I. Ilion* 45, and J.-L. Ferrary and P. Gauthier; 'Le Traité entre le roi Antiochos et Lysimacheia', *Journal des Savants* 1981, 327–345.

[18] Berthold, *Rhodes*, 89–91.

[19] A. Davesne, 'Le Trésor d'Aydincik 1974', in M. Amandry and G. Le Rider (eds), *Trésors et Circulation monétaire en Anatolie antique*, Paris 1994, 37–43.

[20] A. Davesne and V. Yenisoganci, 'Les Ptolémées en Séleucide: le trésor d'Huseyinli', *Revue Numismatique*, 1992, 23–36.,

that the burials took place as their Seleukid enemies were driving these forces away. In Tarsos, in inland Kilikia, it seems that the mint, originally a Seleukid office, switched for two or three years to producing Ptolemaic coins; this took place shortly after the succession of Antiochos II, that is, about the end of 261, and indeed for three years, perhaps until 258–257.[21]

Into this situation we may add the change which took place in the political condition of Arados at this time. It is probable that the city's monarchy had already been removed, but the city and the adjacent mainland, its *peraia*, were still a single political unit under indirect Seleukid control. The city began to date a new era from 259, a fact known from later coins from the city which used that era.[22] A city would only begin a new era to commemorate a major change in its political status. It is Arados' geographical situation which probably supplies the context.

Arados city is on an island (now Arwad) about a kilometre from the Syrian mainland. Its *peraia* stretched along the adjacent coast for seventy or eighty kilometres, occupying the coastal plain, the seaward slopes of the Bargylos Mountains, and the north bank of the Eleutheros River, which river was also the boundary between the Ptolemaic and Seleukid sections of Syria. This valley was one of the obvious invasion routes for a Ptolemaic attack on the Seleukid lands—or for a Seleukid army invading the south. It may be presumed that, whatever the precise political change in the city in 259 (which we do not know, only that the change of era means that a change did happen), it came about from the circumstance of the city's geographical situation, and perhaps also from the presence in Syria, close to Antioch, of the Ptolemaic army which left the gold hoard behind. No doubt an easing of the Seleukid pattern of supervision was involved in return for the active participation of the city on the Seleukid side in the war. The city was a minor naval power; its navy may have been particularly valuable to Antiochos II in the circumstances of a Ptolemaic invasion. The net result was a loosening of his authority which held Arados to the Seleukid side.

These three items, all dated between about 260 and 257, are evidence of a major Seleukid emergency in Syria, in the form of a Ptolemaic attack on Syria and Kilikia, an attack which was probably by sea. Kelenderis

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21 A. Davesne, 'Le Deuxieme Guerre de Syrie … et les temoinages numismatiques', in M. Amandry and S. Hurter (eds), *Travaux de Numismatique grecque offerts à Georges Le Rider*, London 1999, 123–134.

22 Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, 55–56; H. Seyrig, 'Arados et sa Perée sous les rois séleucides', *Syria* 28, 1951, 206–217.

would appear to have been captured, but neither Antioch nor Arados—nor, indeed, any other Seleukid city in Syria—was taken. All three places are close to or on the coast, and all three are geographically close to Cyprus, one of Ptolemy's main overseas bases. A maritime attack was in fact mounted in just this area at the beginning of the next war.

An enemy force which penetrated as far as Daphne, the suburb of Antioch which had major shrine of Apollo, was obviously a major emergency for the Seleukid king. Since Arados was not prepared to join the Ptolemaic side, this force must have landed between Laodikeia and Seleukeia, and no doubt came, in the immediate sense, from Cyprus. That it did not capture any of the main cities may be taken for certain—Ptolemy would surely have made a great fuss about it, which would have reached even our poor sources—and the burial of the hoard near Daphne implies that the force had to retreat with some speed—the money, equivalent to half a talent of silver,[23] was surely part of the official treasury of the expedition, and not even Ptolemy would be in different to such a loss. Similarly with the hoard from Kelenderis which amounted to only 17 pieces—also of gold—but this was after much more had found its way into the pockets of the workmen who found it.

This evidence suggests, therefore, that Ptolemaic forces were active in Syria for a time in 260–259, and in Kilikia in the period from 260 to 257, the dating being, of course, approximate, but the action is clear enough; this is also the period when a new political regime was installed at Arados. The presumed Ptolemaic base for all this activity is Cyprus, and the Ptolemaic forces will have arrived by sea. This moves our attention to the maritime situation.

The fleet used in this expedition may have come from Egypt or Cyprus, or both, but it is also likely that part of it came from the Ptolemaic forces in the Aegean. This would be also a sensible use of the mobility of sea power. A substantial land force would be needed to make a serious attack on the Seleukid position in Syria, and this would need a similarly substantial naval force to transport it. Egypt needed to be guarded firmly, for in the previous war Magas of Cyrene took the opportunity to invade from the west. The recent peace with Antigonos in the Aegean could perhaps be relied on to hold, since both sides had suffered considerably; but Ptolemy's recent defeat at Kos (if this battle took place in about 261) will have left him somewhat weakened.

[23] Davesne (note 21).

Under peacetime conditions the Ptolemaic fleet was probably stationed partly in the Aegean, partly in Cyprus, and another substantial section was at Alexandria. The Aegean was the area where the only possible naval competitors, Macedon and Rhodes, were located, and the Khremonideian War will have compelled a naval concentration there. So in 260 / 259 the main Ptolemaic fleet was in Aegean waters. In wartime ships could be moved to crisis points, and 260–258 it is probable that there was a reduction of the fleet in the Aegean and a new concentration at Cyprus to carry out the invasions of Syria and Kilikia. This now, however, provided Antiochos with the opportunity to strike a blow at the enemy in the west, if he could persuade either Rhodes or Macedon to join in the war. Until 261 Rhodes had been reckoned a friend of Ptolemy, the latter an enemy, though Antiochos I had not been able to provide any direct assistance to Antigonos in his war in the 260s.

The results demonstrate Antiochos II's success in diplomacy. In 258 Rhodes was active in fighting Ptolemy's fleet at Ephesos. The city was at the time in Ptolemy's control, and appears to have been menaced by Antiochos' army by land, while Rhodes' fleet lay offshore. The Ptolemaic fleet, commanded by the exiled Athenian Khremonides, sailed to drive the Rhodians away; believing this was successful, the fleet returned to harbour, only to be suddenly attacked in the act of disembarking, and defeated.[24] Later a Rhodian demonstration in the harbour so distracted the Ephesians that Antiochos was able to break into and capture the city.[25]

Once more these are isolated incidents, without a context other than the war, but the Ptolemaic defeats at Ephesos cannot reasonably be detached from the earlier activity in Syria, since they all occurred within the same restricted period of time. It would seem therefore that Rhodes was able to take advantage of the Ptolemaic naval reduction in the Aegean, though this is only conjecture. (Another date for the battle of Kos is 255, for which a good, if not wholly convincing argument has been made.[26] If so, it would mean that Antigonos had been persuaded to join in the war just as Rhodes had been.) Within the Aegean it seems that the main result of the Ptolemaic defeats, apart from the loss of Ephesos

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[24] Plut. *Moralia* 45B; Athenaios 5.209e ad 8.334a; the date is an old problem: N.G.L. Hammond and F.M. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. III, Oxford 1988, 595–599; H. Heinen, *Untersuchungen zur Hellenistischen Geschichte des 3 Jahrhunderts v. Chr*. Wiesbaden 1972, 193–197.

[25] *Lindos Chronicle* 37; Polyainos 5.18.

[26] K. Buraselis, *Das hellenistische Makedonien und die Agäis*, Munich 1962; Reger's article (note 9) is an extended criticism of Buraselis' dating.

and Miletos, was the loss of Ptolemy's grip on the Island League, which was thereafter dominated by Rhodian or Macedonian power. Evidence for a Rhodian presence in the Kyklades between 261 and 255 is actually nil; equally there is no indication of Ptolemaic power in the area at the same time—or of Macedon's for that matter. Until some more persuasive evidence emerges no answer will be available.

Antigonos' involvement in the Second Syrian War is quite possible.[27] He was already allied to Antiochos, and married still to Phila. His sister Stratonike, the mother of Antiochos II and Phila, was active in making offerings to Apollo at Delphi and Delos. Such offerings may be personal, and evidence of the lady's religious beliefs and feelings, but queens and kings do not make purely private offerings: all their actions have a political and diplomatic dimension. Stratonike's activity in the Aegean is clear evidence of continued contact between her son and her brother, and Antigonos could well have, like the Rhodians, seized on the momentary weakness of the Ptolemaic forces to inflict a defeat upon them.

Antigonos' participation in the war is thus in large part conjectural, though there are enough indications to make a plausible case for it. More directly it is worth considering the dating of events. Once more this is by no means certain, but it would seem to show Antiochos active in the siege of Miletos into 259, and a Ptolemaic invasion of Syria in that same year (and not earlier, since it was Antiochos' attack on and capture of Miletos which provoked the war). A Ptolemaic invasion of Kilikia took place either at the same time or a little later. Antiochos and the Rhodians combined to take Ephesos the next year, 258. It seems unlikely the Antiochos would stay in Asia while Antioch and the other Syrian cities were under immediate threat, so probably the Ptolemaic attack there was designed to compel him to march away from the siege. But the Daphne hoard implies a Ptolemaic defeat and expulsion from Syria, to add to those at Miletos and Ephesos; later, in 257, Ptolemy's forces were driven also from Kilikia.

So the location of the active fighting moved from Ionia to Syria and back to the Aegean. It is also implied that Antiochos was the driving spirit behind the war, and that his object was not to take Koile Syria, for no incursion into the Ptolemaic territory is known, not that this is decisive. (There are certainly indications of strengthened garrisons in Ptolemaic Phoenicia, at Tripolis and Arqa in 258.[28]) This policy of concentrating

[27] Frontinus, *Stratagems* 3.10.
[28] PSI 5.475, 13–14; C. Orrieux, *Zenon de Caunus, parepiedemos et le destin grec*, Paris

on Asia Minor was, of course, a departure from the earlier war aims of his father and grandfather in the contest with Ptolemy I and II. Antiochos II now aimed to reduce Ptolemy's power in the Aegean. The former Seleukid ploy of allying with Magas was no longer available, since Magas was effectively already independent in Cyrenaica. If he headed a coalition which included the naval power of Rhodes, of course, Antiochos necessarily had to tailor his strategy, in part at least, to its interests and geographical situation, which meant the Aegean. The conquest of Ptolemaic cities in Ionia, however, was a substantial economic and political gain.

An ostrakon from Karnak in Egypt refers to 'the king triumphing over the pro-Persian king at the time of the Syrian journey',[29] which is presumably a reference to the Ptolemaic invasion of Syria early in the war, and is perhaps an indication of Ptolemaic propaganda within Egypt. Given the expulsion from Syria and the losses in the Aegean, the ostrakon presumably dates from the brief success in Syria in 259; it is dated 'year 28', which is 258, so the war would seem to be still going well for Ptolemy at that time—if one can trust a source in southern Egypt to know what was happening in Syria and the Aegean.

Any attempt to reconstruct the course of the war is going to be as tentative and unsatisfactory as here, but we can nevertheless discern some of the effects of the fighting on the kingdoms. (The fact that we do not know what happened in the war must not lead us to believe that nothing did; it seems certain enough that the war was fought as vigorously as possible by both sides.)

The pressure on the Ptolemaic empire seems to have stimulated still more efforts to increase the tax-take. The ostrakon from Karnak in which the 'Syrian journey' is noted, was in fact concerned with the implementation of a new decree which ordered a survey of Egypt, district by district, with the obvious intention of extracting even more in taxes from the country.[30] A similar survey was ordered for 'Syrian and Phoenicia' in

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1985, 140; Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*, 55.

[29] E. Bresciani, 'La spedizione di Tolomeo II in Siria in un ostrakon inedito de Karnak', in H. Maehler and V.M. Strocka (eds) *Das Ptolemäische Agypten, Akten des internationalen Symposions … 1976 in Berlin,* Mainz 1978, 31–37; an English version is by Turner in *CAH* VIII, 1, 135; see also J.K. Winnicki, 'Der Zweite Syrische Krieg im lichte des demotischen Karnak-Ostakons und der griechischen papyri des Zenon-archivs', *Journal of Jursitic Papyri*, 21, 1991, 87–104.

[30] P. Grenfell (ed.), *The Revenue Laws of Ptolemy Philadelphus*, Oxford 1896.

260; it was no doubt being conducted during the war.[31] This followed the compilation of a papyrus of 'Revenue Laws' in 258, which appears to be a bureaucratic guidance document, rather than a set of 'laws' as such.[32] Also in 259 there was a general reminting of gold and silver coinage, and this action always resulted in a profit for a government.[33] All these measures, and perhaps others, indicate a royal decision to increase even more the resources at the king's disposal. The expenditures of the previous ten years (on ships, elephant hunts, and so on, as noted in the previous chapter) had been followed by the long and unsuccessful Khremonidean War in the Aegean, and this in turn was followed with scarcely a break by another unsuccessful war—the Second Syrian—which in 258 was still under way and which would clearly prove difficult to stop—it would in fact go on for five more years.

This all suggests that the government of Ptolemy II was feeling the strain. As the superpower of the region every problem which arose was of concern to the king, and had to be addressed by the application of power, which in the context of the time meant military or naval power. His forces were, in the Second Syrian War, engaged in Syria, Kilikia, the Aegean, and western Asia Minor, and all these had to be supported from Egypt by the use of the fleet, and new ships were being built to replace those presumably lost at Kos and Ephesos; the life of a wooden galley was only about a quarter of a century,[34] so by c. 260 those dating from Ptolemy I's later years needed repairing and replacing. This Syrian war was probably a much more expensive undertaking than that named after Khremonides in the Aegean earlier, since it involved more land warfare (which in turn involved the loss of at least two minor treasures of gold coins). For Syria in particular, even without active hostilities, many troops had to remain in service in the garrisons and as a reserve field army in order to meet, or just to deter, any Seleukid attack; the expeditions in 259–257 will have added to this cost.

Antiochos II's kingdom felt the strain as well, but in a different way. The king certainly had enough troubles of his own to deter any attempt to invade Ptolemy's territory. His campaign in western Asia Minor was

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[31] Austin 280.

[32] J. Bingen, *Papyrus Revenue Laws: Nouvelle edition du texte*, Gottingen 1952; cf J. Bingen, 'Le Papyrus Revenue Laws: tradition et adaptation hellénistique', *Rheinische-Westfalishe Akademie des Wissenshaften*, Vorlage G 231, 1978, also in J. Bingen, *Hellenistic Egypt, Monarchy, Society, Economy, Culture*, ed R.S. Bagnall, Edinburgh 2007.

[33] *P. Cairo Zen*. 1.59021; Turner, *CAH* VII, 1, 159.

[34] L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*, 2nd ed., Princeton 1984.

clearly a success, but he took at least two years to capture Miletos and Ephesos, while simultaneously having to defeat the invasion of Syria, and contain that of Kilikia. It seems likely that some parts of Karia swung to the Seleukid side in the aftermath of these conquests. The sanctuary of Labraunda near Mylasa was Seleukid by the time of the war.[35] This sort of movement had to be countered by a strengthening the Ptolemaic presence in other places nearby, and a garrison duly appears at Xanthos in 257/256, which might be new.[36] At some point also Ptolemy II made his nephew Ptolemy son of Lysimachos (a son of King Lysimachos and Arsinoe II) lord of Telmessos.[37] How widely his authority in Karia spread is not known, but his relationship to Ptolemy II would guaranteed him strong influence locally. His presence was also no doubt seen, and intended to be seen, as a threat to Antiochos. As a son of Lysimachos he had as viable a claim to the Asia Minor interior as Antiochos had to Macedon. This is presumably one of the stimuli for the founding of a new Seleukid city in interior Karia, and named Stratonikeia after Antiochos' mother, an area where his father had earlier been inserting his power. It became a flourishing city and so attracted population and power to itself; exactly when it was founded is not clear, but Antiochos II was probably instrumental in financing and organising it.[38]

So Antiochos, even after his victories, had to keep a wary eye on western Asia Minor. Things were also changing in other parts of his kingdom, probably in part as a result of his obsessive concentration on the Aegean area and Syria. In 256 the satrap of Parthia Andragoras rebelled. The reason is unknown, though since he minted coins (only a few are known) his ultimate aim would seem to have been a royal title and independence.[39] His territory lay between Media, which remained firmly under the control of Antiochos II, and Baktria. This latter area was the region which successive co-regents of the whole kingdom had ruled—Antiochos I from 294 to 281, his eldest son Seleukos from 280 until his execution for conspiracy in 268, and Antiochos II from 266 or so until

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[35] *I. Labraunda* 3; Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 92.

[36] *SEG* XXXIII 1183 (*phrourachos* in 260/259) and *TAM* II 262 (garrison in 257/256).

[37] *OGIS* 55 = Austin 270; Bagnall, *Ptolemaic Possessions*, 105–110; M. Wörrle, 'Epigraphische Forschungen zur Geschichte Kariens II: Ptolemaios II und Telmessos', *Chiron* 8, 1978, 201–246; this is a much studied person and subject.

[38] P. Debord, 'Essai sur la géographie historique de la région de Stratonicée', *Mélanges Pierre Levêque*, 8, 1994, 107–122; Ma, *Antiochos III*, 277.

[39] Justin 41.4.7; for the coins: F.M. Holt, *Thundering Zeus, the Making of Hellenistic Baktria*, California 1999, 61, n. 39.

his accession to the throne in 261. It was therefore always semi-detached (as it had been in the Akhaimenid period and even more so under Antigonos). This situation changed with the death of Antiochos I in 261. When Antiochos II succeeded to the kingship he was still in his thirties, and at the time he had no adult son whom he could place in charge in the east—his eldest son, who became Seleukos II, was still only twenty in 246. For the first time in over thirty years the region had to be governed by a satrap rather than the king's heir. The satrap appointed was Diodotos, who had grown up as a loyal Seleukid functionary (presumably), and was no doubt sent to the take over as soon as Antiochos II became king. Diodotos' earlier career was presumably well known to the king, and his loyalty was unquestioned, or he would never have been appointed. Unfortunately we know nothing of the earlier posts he had held, though both military and administrative positions were surely included in his career, and a status as a king's Friend is required. If he was in his forties (he lived on for another twenty years or so), he had been born in the reign of Seleukos I and had seen the growth of the kingdom and will have taken part in the long struggle of Antiochos I to hold his inherited kingdom together.

This assumption helps explain the meagre evidence for Diodotos' rule in Baktria, which is overwhelmingly numismatic.[40] The coins of his time begin with those minted in the name of Antiochos II, though the quantity of coins produced at the only mint which was in operation was much less than in the latter days of Antiochos I, probably because there was sufficient coinage on hand to be able to reduce manufacture. This coinage continued for 'a few years', and then a new series began, coins showing Zeus instead of Apollo on the reverse, and with a head of Diodotos on the obverse instead of the king, but still naming 'King Antiochos'. This curious mixture of political signals in effect indicates Diodotos' independent authority; it can be dated approximately to the early aftermath of Andragoras' move into independence in 256. Andragoras' *coup* in Parthia left Diodotos isolated in Baktria, and will have compelled him to take serious measures to secure both his own authority and the security of the satrapy. His portrait on the coins was thus aimed at reinforcing his own local authority, while naming Antiochos as king indicated in whose name he was ruling. It was a neat solution to an awkward problem.

[40] Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, is the latest and best consideration of the evidence.

In Asia Minor Antiochos had similar problems, but he was able to exercise more control over the process that in the far east. In the 250s the kingdom of Bithynia went through another succession crisis. King Nikomedes attempted to remove his son Ziaelas from the line of succession in favour of the children of a second wife; Ziaelas responded violently and succeeded in wresting power from his father; this took place in about 255.[41] Nikomedes had made a will in which he appointed guardians to ensure that its provisions were carried out: Ptolemy II and Antiochos II were included in the list.[42] Needless to say neither was effective, partly because Ziaelas' *coup* was quickly successful, partly because they were at war with each other, but perhaps mainly because Nikomedes appointed both of them so as to prevent either of them, always at enmity, from actually intervening. But, since Nikomedes was the king who brought the Galatians into Asia Minor, his fate would hardly cause any tears to be shed.

In Kappadokia, which had surely suffered badly from Galatian raiding in the previous generation, a king, 'Ariarathes III', emerged, dating his rule by an era beginning in 255. The Galatians had occupied part of the old Kappadokian satrapy, and the main kingdom was sandwiched between them and the Seleukids, some distance north of Seleukid royal road. Ariarathes' predecessors had ruled in the region, but without claiming the royal title. The family were of Iranian origin, perhaps of satrapal rank in the Achaimenid Empire, but they owed their local authority more to ongoing resistance to their surrounding enemies. The proclamation as king was accompanied or followed by Ariarathes' marriage to a daughter of Antiochos, Stratonike.[43] (If Antiochos II was married in the late 270s, a daughter could by now be in her mid-teens, and so marriageable, by 255; it seems likely that Stratonike was older than her brothers, of whom the eldest was only twenty in 246.) This marriage is a sign that a properly organised and recognised Kappadokian kingdom was thought to be in the Seleukid interest. The old policy of conquest in interior Asia Minor had therefore been changed to one of the acceptance of the local kingdoms; the policy now was to make them allies and, presumably, friends. It is also to some extent a sign of Seleukid weakness and Antiochos II's preoccupation with the Egyptian war, of course, as was the acceptance of the settlement of the Galatians to the north of Ariarathes' territory.

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41 G. Vitucci, *Il regno di Bitinia*, Rome 953; H. Heinen in *CAH* VII, 1, 425.
42 Memnon, *FGrH* 434, F 14.
43 Diod. 31.19; R. Reinach, *Trois royaumes de l'Asie Mineure*, Paris 1888.

All these developments along the northern borders of his kingdom, from the Bosporos to Central Asia, provide good enough reasons for Antiochos to avoid serious fighting against Ptolemy, and may be an explanation for the absence of any records of fighting after 257. (Another reason could be the failure of the sources, of course.) The fact that the war lasted so long presumably implies that both hoped to gain some advantage eventually, though neither apparently did. Peace was made in 253. The only territorial cessions were the loss by Ptolemy of Ephesos and Miletos and some posts in Kilikia. That is, he did not recover what he had lost in the first years of the fighting.

Antiochos kept these conquests, but in the meantime he had lost control of Baktria and Parthia, had seen Kappadokia constitute itself as a kingdom, and had been unable to affect the change of a regime in Bithynia; Pergamon had grown and was now clearly an independent state; Arados was now autonomous. The basic reason for his inability to react to these changes other than to accept them was the necessity to maintain a confrontation with Ptolemy along their mutual border, a need emphasized by the Ptolemaic build-up of military strength in Koile Syria, and Ptolemy's ability to mount an invasion of Syria—apart from at Ephesos, Antiochos had been unable to invade any of Ptolemy's territories. Antiochos could not react militarily to the secession in the east or to the changes in Asia Minor because his forces had to be on guard, above all in Syria, against another possible Ptolemaic attack. That is, he was the weaker of the two powers.

Again there is no documentation about the negotiations for peace, which must have taken place. Antiochos II, by the evidence of his diplomatic and political moves in 260–258 was a cunning negotiator—it took some persuasion, surely, to bring Rhodes into a war against Ptolemy, the only time in its history the city did so. He succeeded in holding on to his conquests at the peace, and organised two more marriages, both of which were important to his position

The first, and probably the first in time, was the marriage of Antiochos' sister Stratonike to Demetrios, the son and designated successor of Antigonos Gonatas.[44] This was now the third marriage linking these two royal families—Seleukos I married the daughter of Demetrios I, Antigonos Gonatas married their daughter, and now Demetrios (II) married the daughter of Antiochos I and Demetrios I's daughter. Husband

[44] Justin 28.1.2; Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1, 249.

and wife were almost as closely related as in the Ptolemaic family marriages. The significance of this marriage, of course, is that it was a reaffirmation of the old Seleukid-Antigonid alliance, which had now lasted on and off for four decades. The alliance rarely signified joint military operations, but it ensured that if one of the kings was involved in a war with Ptolemy, the other remained neutral, even benevolently so. That this alliance was reaffirmed in such a public way just at the time Antiochos II and Ptolemy II were negotiating a peace treaty is a good indication that Antiochos had not only gained territory, but that his diplomatic room for manoeuvre was still considerable.

It is necessary to point this out because the other marriage, of Antiochos himself with Ptolemy's daughter Berenike, is all too often taken to mark a diplomatic triumph for Ptolemy. Yet it is difficult to accept this. The marriage certainly required the repudiation of Antiochos' first wife Laodike, whose extensive compensation has been documented in inscriptions, but that repudiation did not last long.[45] Indeed, it is possible that the royal divorce had taken place before the peace was agreed, possibly in 254. (It is also possible that Antiochos II actually had two wives bigamously, though no ancient source says so.)

Normally a royal marriage indicates an alliance, as with the Seleukid-Antigonid marriages, or sometimes it indicates that the weaker kingdom is taken into a subordinate relationship with the greater. So the marriage of Demetrios II and Stratonike II is a sign of the alliance of the two royal houses; the marriage of Antiochos II's daughter Stratonike to Ariarathes III of Kappadokia is a sign of the recognition of the Kappadokian kingship, but the disparity in power of the two states implies that a Seleukid protectorate was being extended over Kappadokia, presumably to deter Galatian attacks. But the marriage of Antiochos II and Berenike was, given Antiochos' military and diplomatic successes in Asia Minor, certainly not an indication of greater Ptolemaic power; nor can it be seen as an alliance.

We are driven to see the matter in dynastic terms. Ptolemy II's first choice of successor had been Ptolemy Epigonos, but he was now dead. He had two other sons, Ptolemy who eventually became Ptolemy III Euergetes, and Lysimachos, and a daughter, Berenike. These were the children of Philadelphos' first marriage to Arsinoe I; no other children of his

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45 *OGIS* 225 = Austin 173; G.H. Sarkisian, 'City Land in Seleucid Babylonia', in I.M. Diakonov (ed.) *Ancient Mesopotamia*, Moscow 1969, 312–331.

counted as legitimate, though they were numerous.[46] Soon after the peace with Antiochos, Ptolemy's son (the later Euergetes) became engaged to marry another Berenike, the only child of Magas of Cyrene and Apama. This marriage—though it took a major crisis to bring it about—would bring Egypt and Cyrenaica once more into a single kingdom, and this was its obvious purpose. Antiochos II's marriage to Ptolemy II's daughter Berenike would certainly provide him with a claim on Ptolemy's kingdom, just as Ptolemy's (i.e., Euergetes) marriage to Berenike of Cyrene gave him a claim on her inheritance. It was just this situation which Ptolemy II attempted to regulate by his marriage with his sister Arsinoe II, and by his other sister Philotera remaining a spinster, for these women were perceived as carrying in their persons claims to their father's kingship. In marrying Berenike, therefore, Antiochos II was acquiring a claim to Ptolemy II's kingdom.

However, it must be said that these 'claims' were not enforceable in law. The 'claim' of Ptolemy III to rule in Cyrenaica could only succeed if, first, his wife Berenike accepted it, and second, he could enforce it. It was, at root, a matter of power. So in the case of Antiochos II's marriage to the other Berenike, any 'claim' he might advance to the Egyptian throne depended wholly on his ability to make it good by force. In a situation where the Ptolemaic kingdom was clearly more powerful than the Seleukid, Antiochos II's claim would get nowhere, unless the Ptolemaic kingdom collapsed, and unless the male members of the royal family died out—or unless he was designated the next king by his predecessor. On the other hand, Ptolemy II may have felt that he would be able to influence Seleukid policy through his daughter, and possibly through a grandson. Again, though, this was a matter of power not family sentiment, nor a non-existent legality.

All this, of course, stored up trouble for the future. For the present the marriage could be seen as bringing peace between the kingdoms, and we may suppose that, given the stakes involved, the negotiations had been lengthy and difficult. Whether part of the marriage agreement was that any children which resulted would have prior claims to Antiochos' inheritance over the children of Laodike is unknown, though the issue certainly arose later, and on the Ptolemaic side it was probably hoped that children would result. It seems unlikely that the kings expected the marriage to unite their kingdoms, any more than the Seleukid-Antigonid

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[46] Ptolemy VIII, *Hypomnemata*, *FGrH* 234, F 4.

unions were expected to unite those kingdoms. Repudiating Laodike was also a major political step for Antiochos to take, if he did, for she was well connected; like the marriage to Berenike, it stored up trouble for later.

Laodike was, as noted, from the family of Akhaios, which was a powerful political force in western Asia Minor (and she was Antiochos' cousin). She went back to her family's lands after her divorce, compensated by the gift of estates to provide her with a standard of living suitable to a queen. This was politically a dangerous moment for Antiochos. Akhaios may or may not have been the son of Seleukos I, but he was a powerful man in western Asia Minor and his was therefore not a family which the king could afford to alienate. Another of Akhaios' daughters, Antiochis, had married Attalos, the first cousin of the new ruler of Pergamon, and their son was to be the heir of Eumenes I. This was clearly a political alliance of major families in a particularly sensitive part of the Seleukid kingdom. Laodike, however, took the divorce calmly, it seems, no doubt supported by her family, by her wealth, and by the knowledge that her sons by Antiochos were his successors. But the situation in Asia Minor, as well as in eastern Iran, was clearly unstable. Despite his successes in the Second Syrian War, Antiochos' kingdom was quaking beneath his feet.

The problems of the Seleukid kingdom were the result of Antiochos' own policies and relatives. To concentrate on capturing two cities on the Aegean coast he had clearly neglected the problems of the east, which as a former ruler there he should have understood—perhaps he simply relied on Diodotos' loyalty; accepting the new monarchy in Kappadokia could be construed as weakness; divorcing Laodike was a gratuitous gesture—he did not have to marry Berenike—which might be seen as an insult, or a threat, by all the Anatolian dynasts; failure to influence the dynastic dispute in Bithynia could be seen as an abdication of responsibility.

Peace with Ptolemy was therefore only a partial solution to Antiochos' difficulties. He would free his military forces from the need to watch the frontier and he would be able to use them elsewhere. Alliance with Antigonos had been reaffirmed. Marriage to Ptolemy's daughter could be portrayed as a great peace gesture. Further, and this cannot have been absent from Antiochos' calculations, Ptolemy II was in his fifties by now, and could not be expected to live much longer, while Antiochos was a good ten or fifteen years younger. When Ptolemy died, the war could be resumed, and with Berenike by Antiochos' side it may have been calculated that Ptolemaic resistance might crumble. There is no real sign

that this peace treaty was expected to be a definitive settlement between the two: it contained far too many awkward problems for the future, all of which was surely fully visible to the participants at the time.

The Second Syrian War had therefore concluded with a treaty which was little more than an armistice to last only until the death of one of the principals. Already manoeuvring was taking place in preparation, as with the betrothal of Ptolemy II's heir to the heiress of Cyrene. The war might be considered a victory for Antiochos if one focussed on his conquests on the Asia Minor coast; but elsewhere he had clearly lost ground, in Kappadokia and in the east. All in all the truce concluded a war which seems best to be described as a draw. All therefore was still to play for, and Ptolemy II's measures to extract even more wealth from his hard-working subjects might be considered as laying stronger foundations for the next struggle.

## CHAPTER SIX

# INCREASING STRAINS

In July 253 King Ptolemy II paid a visit to Memphis. For the king to do so in the height of the Egyptian summer, and while the Nile flood was still rising was, if not unprecedented, at least highly unusual. While there he oversaw the establishment of a number of cleruchs on land in the area, which are known to have taken place at this time. The cleruchs were former soldiers, discharged at the end of the Second Syrian War and settled with plots of land as part of their pay for their military services. There was trouble over at least some of these settlements. At Ammonias near to Philadelphia in the reclaimed area of the Fayum, the soldiers were allocated land already occupied by about 150 Egyptian farmers; after a dispute a settlement was made between the two groups, but later the farmers were evicted; they fled to another village near Memphis. For these farmers the end of the war was a disaster; and they were not the only ones.[1]

The royal visit to Memphis may best be connected to these cleruchic settlements, which evidently were difficult and liable to cause trouble; perhaps the soldiers also needed help in their initial work. If this is correct, then we have evidence that the war ended sometime before July of 253. (We also have evidence of the constant attention to detail required of a Hellenistic king.) The peace negotiations had probably taken some months to conclude, for they involved not only agreements on the acceptance of terms, but discussions on the royal marriage and on the size and form of the dowry. This in turn may well have involved Antiochos II's negotiations for the divorce from his first wife Laodike, and on the estates and income he was to settle on her. One would imagine that the process, involving no doubt repeated journeys and consultations, could well have taken a year or so.

[1] W. Clarysse, 'A Royal Visit to Memphis and the end of the Second Syrian War', in D.J. Crawford *et al*, *Studies in Ptolemaic Memphis*, Louvain 1980, 83–89, and references there to other settlements.

The marriage of Antiochos II and Berenike took place next year. In April 252 her escort was returning from the border where he had delivered her and her dowry to her new husband.[2] The dowry is described, in a passage which bears all the hallmarks of being derived from Ptolemaic propaganda, as 'infinite amounts of gold and silver'.[3] Certainly the dowry of a princess on her marriage to a king will be large and rich, but to go further, as some do, and suggest that it included, or even consisted of, a lien on the tax-take in Ptolemaic Koile Syria, or that the dowry represented a war indemnity in disguise, is quite unwarranted.[4] Similarly to suggest that Antiochos agreed in the treaty to favour his children by Berenike (if they had any) over his existing offspring from Laodike, is highly unlikely,[5] and anyway was quite unenforceable for at least twenty years, by which time both kings would probably be dead.

Berenike's journey and the handover to Antiochos was a great state and international occasion. The king had escorted his daughter to Pelusion, the border of Egypt proper, on the first stage of her journey. The linking of the two dynasties was clearly intended to symbolize the state of peace now existing between them. On the other hand, the clear extravagance of such an occasion also highlighted the indecisive result of the previous war. By delivering his daughter to the enemy Ptolemy was, it might seem, attempting to hide the fact that he had lost territory by the peace.

The marriage of Antiochos II and Berenike had little effect on the international policies of either kingdom. The next several years show that Antiochos did not alter his basically anti-Ptolemaic stance in any way merely because he had acquired a Ptolemaic princess for a wife. Marriages amongst the royals of the Hellenistic world were always essentially political treaties, and like all such agreements they dealt essentially with the past and not the future. The marriage brought the Second Syrian War to an end, and was therefore part of the price, just as the abandonment of hopes of recovering Ephesos and Miletos was part of the price Ptolemy paid. The basic policies of the states towards each other had not changed, though, of course, the peace agreement meant that their mutual hostility was exercised in less open, more subtle ways.

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[2] *P. Cairo Zen.*, 2.59251 and 59252.

[3] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 43; this is a passage quoted, or adapted, by Jerome, *In Danielem* 11.6a; it is clearly biased towards the Ptolemaic account; Porphyry-Jerome must be read very carefully.

[4] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 44.

[5] Ogden, *Polygamy*, 129.

Ptolemy's internal policy of extracting even more of Egypt's resources for royal use did not change either, though the fact that he was now at peace presumably allowed him to stockpile resources more efficiently. Nor had he abandoned his ultimate intention of recovering his lost cities, as later events showed. Antiochos, free of the preoccupation with the war with Ptolemy, could now attend seriously to the internal problems of his own kingdom, which were numerous—and included the presence in Asia Minor of his former wife. Yet he did not abandon his anti-Ptolemaic activities, and in the years after the peace he made some important political gains. Both kings clearly assumed that their peace agreement bound them for the rest of their lives—or at least for the rest of the life of the king who died first.

One of the areas in which Hellenistic states perennially interfered was Crete.[6] This was a much-divided island, productive of pirates, and a major source of mercenaries and emigrants. Egypt received considerable numbers of men from the island;[7] Magas of Cyrene had a treaty with Oreios in western Crete;[8] Ptolemy II established a protectorate over the city of Itanos in eastern Crete in about 268,[9] where a Ptolemaic naval base was developed. Geographically it was well placed to dominate the sea passages between Crete and Rhodes, and so also to act as a naval staging post between Cyprus and the Aegean. Between them these several interests suggest a predominant Ptolemaic role in the island, though the cities were less than amenable to outside control.

Antiochos I had a treaty with the city of Lyttos which appears to have been aimed at allowing him to recruit soldiers.[10] In 249 Antiochos II renewed and extended that treaty to one of 'friendship and alliance'.[11] The time and place are clearly significant. Lyttos was a city which had

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[6] The main accounts of Crete are by H. van Effenterre, *La Crète et le Monde grec*, Paris 1948, and S. Spyridakis, *Ptolemaic Itanos and Hellenistic Crete*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1970.

[7] R.S. Bagnall, 'The Origins of Ptolemaic Cleruchs', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 21, 1984, 7–20; J.L. O'Neil, 'Places of Origin of the Officials of Ptolemaic Egypt', *Historia* 55, 2006, 16–25; M. Launey, *Recherches sur les Armées Hellénistiques*, Paris 1941, 322–332.

[8] *I. Crete* I, Lisos 1; Oreios was the centre of a confederation of cities (van Effenterre, *La Crète*, 119–126).

[9] *I. Crete* IV, 2 and 3; the city's administration was reorganised by Ptolemy II's admiral Patroklos, though the oligarchy retained much internal autonomy.

[10] This follows from the renewal by Antiochos II; the date of Antiochos I's treaty is not known.

[11] *I. Crete* I, Lyttos 8.

remained aloof from the shifting alliances of the other Cretan cities, but it was a neighbour to several small cities which were all friends of Ptolemy. It was also reasonably close to the naval base at Itanos, where there was a Ptolemaic garrison.

The Seleukid connection with Lyttos may have had several purposes. One would be to establish a connection with a source of military manpower, just as every other power from Magas of Cyrene round to Antigonos Gonatas did. But the proximity of Lyttos to Itanos, and its freedom from political connections with other Cretan cities, rather suggests that it was selected for Seleukid attention because of its geographical and political location: it could pose a constant, if latent, threat to Ptolemaic Itanos merely by having a treaty of friendship with Antiochos, so compelling Ptolemy to keep a garrison at the naval base. One of the methods in anti-Ptolemaic policy was to compel Ptolemy to extend himself ever more widely, and so increase his costs and weaken his power everywhere.

The renewal of the older treaty may well have been in part a response to the death of King Magas of Cyrene which took place in 250. (It is worth noting that it does not seem to have been renewed when Antiochos II inherited in 261.) Magas had been allied with Gortyn,[12] one of the major cities of the island, and of course, with his father-in-law Antiochos I. Much of Crete was therefore linked in alliances which in part at least must be seen as anti-Ptolemaic. The deaths of Antiochos I and Magas sapped the foundations of the anti-Ptolemaic grouping; Antiochos II's renewal of the alliance with Lyttos maintained the pressure on Ptolemy's friends, and reopened the island as the scene of competition between the greater kingdoms.

Contrary to what might have been expected, once he was free of the war with Ptolemy, Antiochos II did not turn to attend to the problems of Iran. Neither Parthia nor Baktria were his main concerns. The usurping governor of Parthia, Andragoras, was removed by an invasion by the Parni, nomads coming out of the steppe-desert to the north, led by Arsakes. How long the conquest took is not known, but the Parthian era—the Parni adopted the province's name as their own designation—began in 247. This may have been the year Andragoras was removed, and so Arsakes could claim to be king. It is a possibility, of course,

[12] By way of Magas' agreement with Oreios (note 8).

that Antiochos had provoked the Parni invasion to keep Andragoras occupied, a tactic not unknown later in the region, but there is no evidence for this.[13]

The Parthians' control of their conquest was still very limited. They had difficulty in capturing cities. Hekatompylos, the provincial capital, became their own centre once it was taken. But even before that, their presence within Parthia will have cut the road connecting Media with Baktria; in Baktria the satrap Diodotos continued in office, minting coins with his own image, but still in the name of Antiochos II, until sometime after the severing of his direct land link with the west.[14] It may have been this hint of continued loyalty to Antiochos by Diodotos which allowed him to ignore the east; and the elimination of Andragoras was clearly something he will have been pleased to hear, even if he had nothing to do with it. As soon as he was involved in fighting the Parni, Andragoras ceased to be an active threat to Antiochos or Diodotos.

But the main reason Antiochos II did not attend to the problems of the east was that he was wholly preoccupied with western Asia Minor. The repudiation of Laodike could have caused problems in this area, for her family connections were with Akhaios and Attalos—she was Akhaios' daughter[15] and Attalos' sister-in-law—and one of the estates she was given for her support was in the region.[16] The cities of Ephesos and Miletos, recently brought over to Antiochos' side, were not necessarily wholly loyal to him, any more than was any other city of the region. The new dynasty in Pergamon had won its independence by defeating his father, and Laodike's sister was married into that family. It was clearly an unstable region which deserved careful watching; its rulers were closely linked to each other, but now not really to him; no doubt Antiochos was very conscious of this, and knew that it required his attention. From outside, Ptolemy II was obviously also concerned, and ambitious to recover his lost territories; constant intrigues could be expected.

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[13] This episode has been often studied; the basic sources are Justin 41 and Strabo 11.92–3; studies of the issue include N.C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago 1938; J. Wolski, 'The Decay of the Iranian Empire of the Seleucids and the Chronology of the Parthian Beginnings', *Berytus* 12, 1956–1958, 35–52; D. Musti in *CAH* VII, 1, 210–220. The issue is subject to much argument and disagreement.

[14] F.M. Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, California 1999, 94–101.

[15] Ogden, *Polygamy*, 124–125, makes Laodike the daughter of Antiochos I and 'his sister-wife' Nysa, but this is only achieved by linking two doubtful notices (Polyainos 8.50 and Stephhanos of Byzantion, sv *Antiocheia*).

[16] *OGIS* 225 = Austin 173.

It is also worth always recalling, in considering these Hellenistic rulers, that they owed everything to heredity. Neither Antiochos II nor Ptolemy II would have been kings had it not been that their fathers were kings, and that their inheritance included the aspirations of their predecessors. Antiochos II had a claim to Koile Syria and Palestine, and neither he nor his successors ever surrendered it. He also could mount a plausible claim to Macedon, though this claim was never exercised after Antiochos I made peace with Antigonos Gonatas in 280. Gonatas was still alive, and his alliance with the Seleukids had been renewed by the marriage of his son and Antiochos II's sister; the claim could be revived in the future, if ever it was required or it was reasonable to try for it. Antiochos also had a claim to rule in Thrace, based on its inclusion within Lysimachos' kingdom, which had fallen to Seleukos in 281.

Thrace was a complex little region, including not only mainland Thrace, but the Straits and the Thracian Chersonese and several cities as well. It was one in which Ptolemy II had already interested himself, by his naval expedition to assist Byzantion and to contact the Bosporan (Crimea) kingdom. Here again was a place in which Antiochos could legitimately (from his point of view) become involved without violating any of the oaths of peace with Ptolemy he had sworn. It was a region in which he could disrupt Ptolemaic plans, challenge Ptolemy's intentions, and make territorial gains in a strategically important area.

There was also long-standing antagonism between the Seleukids and the Bithynian kingdom. At least one Seleukid invasion had been fought off, and King Nikomedes had been responsible for introducing the Galatians into Asia Minor. It was also, like all kingdoms, liable to disruption at the time of the royal succession. King Nikomedes had been dethroned by his son Ziaelas in 255; he lived on till about 250, but Ziaelas had the power.[17] The coasts of the Straits were lined with Greek cities, whose history in most cases went back several centuries to the early colonization in the seventh century BC Some of these had fallen to the Bithynians, such as Astakos, refounded as Nikomedeia, and Nikaia. Others remained in a constrained independence, such as Kyzikos and Byzantion. Some were publicly linked with the Attalids, or with the Seleukids, and were able to act with more or less autonomy, depending on the king's presence and preoccupations. Altogether it was a rich and fertile field in which an ambitious king could meddle. Inland Thrace was dominated by the Gala-

[17] Justin 27.3; G. Vitucci, *Il Regno di Bitinia*, Rome 1953, 30–33.

tian Kingdom of Tylis, which extracted substantial tribute from Byzantion, and probably from other cities. There were also Thracian principalities here and there. Here was a good opportunity to intervene on behalf of the threatened cities.

The stages of Antiochos' moves into this region, and his occupation of part of Thrace, are uncertain. There was an agreement with the Lysimacheia,[18] a city under perpetual threat from the Thracian warriors, and which needed to be regularly rescued by one or other of the kings. The Seleukid king was a helpful source of protection, even if the first of the dynasty was murdered nearby and the city had rapidly acclaimed his murderer—but then Seleukos had been responsible for the death of the city's founder Lysimachos. Lysimacheia, at the root of the Thracian Chersonese, was the key to further advances into Thrace by any campaigner coming out of Asia. The document detailing the agreement between the city and the king was, in formal terms, an alliance, and has even been seen as one between equals,[19] but this can only be accepted as a polite gesture by the king. It was Antiochos who had the responsibility of helping the city, not the other way around, and this included having the use of the city's harbours; the Lysimacheians had only a passive role in the alliance, which in fact reduced the city to dependence on Antiochos.

It was presumably from his political, military and naval base in this city that Antiochos expanded his authority into eastern Thrace, an authority marked by the discovery of substantial quantities of his coins at several Thracian sites, including Kabyle, Seuthopolis, Kypsela, Mesembria, and Apollonia.[20] He also minted coins at several cities in the region, including Alexandria Troas, Lampsakos, and Lysimacheia, which was the main mint. It is probable he also minted at Kabyle in Thrace.[21]

These incursions were in part by means of alliances, as with Lysimacheia, and perhaps with the Greek cities at Mesembria and Apollonia, along the western Black Sea coast; it was also martial, for there is a brief

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[18] *I. Ilion* 45 = Austin 171; the dated is uncertain, the reference being to 'king Antiochos', without further specification; J.L. Ferrary and P. Gauthier, 'Le Traité entre le roi Antiochos et Lysimacheia', *Journal des Savants* 1981, 327–345, argue that the king was Antiochos I (accepted by Ma, *Antiochos III*, 266–267), but the original attribution to Antiochos III is just about as likely.

[19] Austin 171, prefatory note.

[20] J. Youroukova, 'La Présence des Monnaies de Bronze des premiers Séleucides en Thrace; leur importance historique', *Studia P. Naster Oblata*, vol. 1, Louvain 1982, 115–126

[21] Newell, *Western Seleucid Mints*, 318–325; Houghton, *Seleucid Coins*, 166.

record in Polyainos of the siege of Kypsela by Antiochos II.[22] Polyainos' purpose in the item is to give an example of a stratagem by which the defending group was persuaded into surrender by the wealth lavished by their enemy on the friends who had joined him. It also, incidentally, shows that Antiochos had recruited a substantial Thracian force; one of its commanders was a man called Dromichaetes, which is the name also of the Getic chieftain who once captured Lysimachos—it is assumed they are grandfather and grandson. Antiochos thus seems to have been able to use alliances with local tribes and kings as well as the Greek cities in his conquest of Thrace.

One result of this gradual advance in Seleukid authority into the north-west was to antagonize Byzantion. This city was already allied with Ptolemy II, but this did not prevent war beginning between the city and Antiochos II.[23] The conquest of eastern Thrace was obviously a threat to the city, which was becoming surrounded by his power and his allies. Antiochos' acquisition of the Thracian Chersonese gave him control of both sides of the Hellespont, and this was another apparent threat. At the same time, by controlling eastern Thrace he may have cut the contact between Byzantion and the Galatians of the Tylis kingdom, established somewhere in interior Thrace, to which Byzantion had had to pay a regular and onerous tribute. This may have been a boon, but it certainly did not reconcile Byzantion to the near presence of Seleukid power; the Tylis kingdom could be bought off; this was not an option with the Selukid king.

These were no doubt all contributory factors to the war, but the fact that Ptolemy managed to keep out of the conflict suggests that something other than direct hostility between Byzantion and Antiochos was involved. The city of Herakleia Pontike, some way along the Black Sea coast to the east, gave Byzantion assistance[24] and, while there is no record of Bithynian involvement, one might assume that King Ziaelas did the same—he controlled Chalkedon, directly across the Bosporos from Byzantion; Seleukid control of the Hellespont and Byzantion might well be too much to contemplate for any of these states. Later Ziaelas is recorded as being allied with Ptolemy III (in the 240s), but there is no record of a Ptolemaic alliance with his father, the dethroned Nikomedes.

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22 Polyainos 4.16.
23 Memnon, *FGrH* 434, F 15.
24 Ibid.

The involvement of these polities could give Ptolemy a good excuse to stay out of the quarrel, quite apart from the peace he had agreed with Antiochos. He could easily provide assistance to Antiochos' enemies by clandestine means.

This local problem is a good example of the possibilities inherent in the situation where a peace treaty, reinforced by public oaths, existed between the great powers, which were thereby restrained from reopening their war. The minor states—Lysimacheia, Byzantion, Bithynia, and so on—may have been linked to one or other of the greater kingdoms, but they were not in the same condition of oath-sworn peace as the kings. They were therefore clearly regarded both as acceptable prey and as acceptable surrogates by the greater kings. At some point, presumably, if the situation became too threatening, one of the kings could have angrily denounced his opponent for breaking their joint oath and gone to war, but this never seems to have happened—at least so far as we know. No doubt, in this case, as in others, Antiochos was careful to advance only by small steps, and not to move if it was clear that Ptolemy regarded one of his vital interests as so endangered that he would find it necessary to react directly. Yet there was clearly plenty of room in which both kings could manoeuvre, in Thrace and in Crete, and no doubt among other cities and regions as well—Karia is another example.

This concentration on the western parts of his kingdom by Antiochos II, and his expansion into new areas, is a vivid indication of the priority he gave to capturing a few Greek and Thracian cities over recovering control of whole Iranian provinces. It is no surprise that the Baktrian satrap was now heading for complete independence, given that he was largely cut off from the rest of the Seleukid kingdom by the Parthian invasion, and wholly unlikely—and unable—to get any help from his king. The underlying priority of Antiochos II, of course, was to prepare for the next war with the Ptolemaic kingdom, which, given that Ptolemy II was now in his sixties, he must have confidently expected. In any new war assistance from Macedon (now his immediate neighbour in Thrace) would be welcome, and control of the Straits very useful, and the control of several Greek cities of Asia Minor would be one of the prizes.

Far from succumbing to age and decrepitude, Ptolemy II was also preparing for the next war. The tightening of the government's grip on internal matters and finance, which is signalled by the measures taken in the early 250s, was one part of the policy he pursued. He was also concerned in the ongoing contest between Macedon and its Greek clients

and their enemies—a contest Antiochos II conspicuously kept clear of; and he was intriguing also in the kingdom of his half-brother Magas in Cyrenaica.

Magas had ruled Cyrenaica since 283. He had a marriage alliance with the Seleukid kingdom through his wife, Apama, the sister of Antiochos II, though whether an active political connection continued is not certain—the original agreement had been with Antiochos I. Magas' kingdom was of a peculiar constitution, a group of five Greek cities, plus a hinterland inhabited by Libyan nomads. Neither of these groups was especially enamoured of his rule, the cities hoping for increased autonomy, the nomads for independence and the opportunity to raid the cities' lands. Magas had managed to hold it all together for a generation, but he, like Ptolemy, was now old, and the succession to him was under discussion. The first problem was that Magas and Apama had no sons. The possibilities included the marriage of their only daughter Berenike to one of several suitors, who could then assume the kingship; the takeover of the whole state by Ptolemy II, either peacefully or violently; or the revived independence of the various cities and tribes which would probably result, subsequently, in political chaos. These possibilities also included likely alliances between the various groups and states and people.

Magas died in 250,[25] which may have meant the end of whatever agreements that existed between him and the Greek cities he ruled. At least one city, probably Cyrene, solicited constitutional advice from two tyrannicides from Megalopolis in the Peloponnese, who provided a model set of laws.[26] The use of such men for such a purpose was a clear indication of the city's repudiation of the rule of any king. But the city neglected to ensure the removal of the dynasty, and neither Apama nor Berenike was prepared to give up that position, though the evidence is that they did not agree on what should be done. Berenike was already engaged to be married to Ptolemy II's son, who was also heir to Egypt, and she appears to have welcomed this. Yet she was not yet married. No doubt the betrothal had included a clause that the marriage should wait until Magas died—Magas would scarcely welcome a new Ptolemy disputing his authority—and may thus be regarded as provisional only. Apama, a long-time enemy of Ptolemy II, did not approve. She contacted

[25] The date is approximate: Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 45.

[26] Polybios 10.22.3; Plut. *Philopoimen* 1.4; A. Laronde. *Cyrène et la Libye hellénistique*, Paris 1987; cf. Walbank 2.224.

the Macedonian king Antigonos Gonatas, who provided a half-brother of his, Demetrios the Fair, to marry Berenike, and Berenike was apparently persuaded to agree.[27]

The wider diplomatic situation must also be borne in mind. One of Ptolemy II's most implacable enemies was Antigonos Gonatas, so Apama's request for a king from Macedon was a welcome chance for Gonatas to disrupt Ptolemy's plans. Gonatas was also allied with Antiochos, so the Macedonian connection was another route to align Cyrenaica with the Seleukids: Apama was apparently still loyal to her birth family. Gonatas also no doubt saw it as an opportunity to extend his influence across the Mediterranean. He might also have in mind the apparent influence of the two Megalopolitans in Cyrene, for in the Peloponnese they had campaigned against the men he had installed as tyrants in cities there. Apama did not approach her brother Antiochos directly, perhaps because there was no adult Seleukid available for transfer to Cyrenaica—though she was certainly aware, as was every other politically alert person in the Mediterranean, that Gonatas and Antiochos II were allies, and that the extension of the Gonatas' influence at the expense of Ptolemy II would certainly be welcomed by Antiochos.

Demetrios was king in Cyrene for only a short time, perhaps one campaigning season, for the constitutional crisis will have excited Libyan hopes of loot and independence and a campaign to suppress the nomads' ambitions was clearly required. But he was not Magas, and he was faced with a complex situation in which he was overwhelmed by the problems and difficulties. The story recounted in the historians centres on the killing of Demetrios by his wife, which was said, or assumed, to be because he was enamoured of his mother-in-law. The unlikeliness of this—Apama was at least fifty years old by this time, and probably more—is compounded by her being referred to as 'Arsinoe'.[28] Demetrios is said to have been arrogant, and this is probably a correct memory of him, but the opposition to him came not just from his wife, but also from the cities. Cyrene's new constitution presupposes a move by that city towards independence, and so a general unrest among all the cities at the continuance of the monarchic regime; Demetrios' attempt to emulate Magas was therefore doomed. His murder was hardly unexpected, but it will have destroyed the monarchic regime.

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27 Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.237 f.

28 Justin 26.3.3–8; Catullus 66.25–28.

The deaths of two Cyrenaican kings within a short time (less than a year) was deeply destabilizing, and intrigue and conspiracy compounded the situation. The looming presence of Ptolemy II was similarly disturbing. The political instability must have further encouraged the Libyans. It is the absence of Ptolemy's involvement which is the most curious aspect. The marriage arranged between his son and Berenike was a contract which both sides should have honoured, though the delay clearly indicates doubts, at least on the Cyrenaican side. The intervention of Apama and Demetrios against the union—or reunion—seems to have taken place without Ptolemy's interference, though presumably he had a right to expect the betrothal with his son to be honoured. It also seems that Berenike herself was in favour of the Egyptian marriage, if we may judge from her reported involvement in the killing of Demetrios. No doubt, however, Ptolemy had been watching the situation carefully, gauging his moment of intervention.

The murder of Demetrios, and the possible dissolution of the kingdom (and perhaps a threatened Libyan invasion) was his moment. The net result was the reincorporation of Cyrenaica into the Ptolemaic kingdom, just as Magas' daughter was incorporated into the Ptolemaic family. This was clearly a political and diplomatic victory for Ptolemy, which might offset to some degree the steady expansion of Antiochos in the area of the Straits and Thrace. It certainly shifted Cyrenaica out of the list of likely enemies of Egypt in the next war. Thus Ptolemy removed one of the major political-strategic problems which had bedevilled all his schemes since his accession. Cyrenaica was now no longer a threat to his throne (though it continued to require careful governing). Apama, and hence also Magas and Demetrios, had been the symbol of the detachment of Cyrenaica from the Ptolemaic state system; the marriage of Berenike to the Ptolemaic heir was a sign that Ptolemy II was making political preparations to resume his challenge to the Seleukid kingdom, just as Antiochos' activity in Thrace and Crete was his own preparation for any challenge. Ptolemy's action was all the more necessary to him given the stranglehold Antiochos had developed in the northwest, and the extension, or renewal, of his influence in Crete with the new treaty with Lyttos. This was agreed in 249, quite possibly in the wake of the resolution of the Cyrenaican problem—which Antiochos could only regard as a diplomatic defeat.

The Cyrenaican crisis had demonstrated to everyone how fragile these Hellenistic kingdoms were. True, it was not a great power, though the area had an old tradition of monarchy under the Battiad dynasty from

the sixth to the fourth century, which Magas had revived. He had ruled without any visible internal difficulty for a quarter of a century, and yet the whole monarchic system crumbled as soon as he died and the ruling family fell into dispute—and thereby also into disrepute. Ptolemy II's takeover, in the name of his son, could be seen as rescuing the monarchy from the chaos of city-state anarchy, and the rescue of the cities from the Libyan menace—a clever combination, achieved probably by simply waiting. And the three greater kingdoms were all approaching similar crises of succession. One of the more macabre calculations of the time must have been trying to anticipate which of the three kings would die first: Antigonos and Ptolemy were in their sixties and they must have been expected to go first; Antiochos was in his late forties. Succession crises were to be expected in all cases.

The princess Berenike had arrived in Antioch in Syria in 252 accompanied by a swarm of servants, brought a huge dowry, and was installed in the palace in the city. (The dowry is stated to be 'gold and silver'; to suggest that it was 'the fictitious title to … Koile Syria'[29] makes no sense.) She was, that is, independently wealthy. Antiochos in the next years was usually away from Antioch, campaigning or politicking in Asia Minor and Thrace; in 250 he was at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris for a time,[30] and he probably visited Babylonia more or less regularly. Berenike produced a son, named Antiochos,[31] in 250 or 249, but apparently she remained at Antioch or thereabouts. Laodike lived in western Asia Minor, latterly at least in Ephesos, with her children by Antiochos. In this situation the political class of Antioch became divided, some favouring Berenike and her son, and some the sons of Laodike. All three boys were in fact very young, the eldest son of Laodike, Seleukos, was born about 264, the second, Antiochos, later called Hierax, about 260. (There were also two girls, Stratonike and Laodike.) The general assumption was probably that one or more would not reach adulthood, but in the meantime, all these boys were clearly eventual candidates for the kingship. The supposed agreement about Berenike's son having priority became public knowledge.

Whether there really was an agreement between Antiochos and Ptolemy on this is extremely doubtful. Antiochos was not, at the time of the

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[29] Ogden, *Polygamy* 129; on the other hand, Antiochos might have used the idea of a dowry to advance the claim of his family to Koile Syria as an excuse for war when Ptolemy II died—if he died before Antiochos.

[30] Sachs and Hunger, −249.

[31] The child's name is now known from an inscription: Austin 267.

peace negotiations, in such a subordinate position that Ptolemy could insist, and it seems unlikely that Ptolemy really wanted his nephew, a child with a claim to his own throne, to have a kingdom of his own. It seems much more likely that the idea was put about by Berenike or her supporters, perhaps when it became clear that Antiochos was moving back to live with Laodike, as he did in the 240s, perhaps as a result of his operations in Thrace. She was being treated as queen once more by 246.[32] No doubt substantial numbers of the important people in Antioch, and in the equally important city of Seleukeia-in-Pieria nearby, will have aligned themselves with Berenike to gain favour, either from Berenike as queen, or as the future regent for her son. The longer she stayed in the city, and in Syria, the more she was the centre of local political attention.

Ptolemy II may not have intended Berenike's child to become an actual claimant when he promoted the marriage of his daughter, but it does seem likely that he was not unmindful of the political possibilities involved. Even if he did not expect it, he will have been happy to exploit the situation. Yet it is going too far to suggest he was deliberately promoting the possibility of internal dispute within the Seleukid family.[33] For a start it was by no means inevitable that it would occur, and second, the internal family dispute, when it developed, was not between the rival queens but between Laodike's sons.

The basic difficulty with the dispute between the two wives is not its likelihood but our complete lack of information about the politics of the Syrian cities. By the early 240s the Syrian cities had existed for half a century, and can be assumed to have become fully organized, with *boulai*, magistrates, civic buildings, taxes, a stable population, and so on. In social terms the population included Greeks and Syrians, by this time not all of them immigrants, but the former were the socially superior group—and within them were the rich, the men who took up the usual civic offices. In political terms the cities were organised as democracies, but in practice they were fairly restricted oligarchies. There was also the garrison and the *epistates*, both royal appointments. Among the population of any city, therefore, those who really were of political and social importance were relatively few. So Berenike in Antioch could exercise her political influence upon this small group. In the uncertainty of the succession produced by the political pressure she was able to exert after the birth of her baby, there would be confusion and perplexity. On

32 Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 43.
33 Ogden, *Polygamy* 129.

the other hand there seems to be no suggestion that Berenike had any support elsewhere in the kingdom and Syria was only a part of the state.

Ptolemy II became deeply involved in the continuing crisis in Greece, where the Akhaian and Aitolian Leagues were now developing as threats to his position, and where the Greek cities were, as ever, competing with each other, and either supporting or opposing Macedonian influence. This was obviously fertile ground for outside intrigues. About 250 Antigonos Gonatas' governor of Corinth and Chalkis in Euboia, his half-brother Krateros, died. Antigonos appointed Krateros' son Alexander as his successor. A year later Alexander proclaimed his independence of Antigonos.[34] Next door, in Sikyon, a tyrant had recently been overthrown by a young politician, Aratos. He went to Egypt to receive a subsidy—150 talents, in two instalments[35]—and it is generally supposed that Alexander's move into independence was also assisted by support from Egypt.[36]

This fits well enough into the general context of the conflict between Egypt and Macedon which went in parallel with that between the Ptolemies and the Seleukids. The brief rule of Demetrius the Fair in Cyrenaica (in 250) was part of this context, as was Ptolemy's gesture of support to Aratos, and perhaps to Alexander. This is all of a piece with the actions of both Ptolemy II and Antiochos II in the same period in the Straits and Thrace and Crete, except that events in Greece were not under the control of Ptolemy, even if he helped promote them, whereas Antiochos was clearly in control of events in Thrace and the north-west. Neither Aratos nor Alexander actually did as Ptolemy wanted, though Antigonos' position in central and southern Greece was badly weakened by their actions, and in the brief war which followed, Alexander was successful in maintaining himself.

Into this ongoing series of disputes, intrigues, and crises—the two Seleukid queens, Alexander of Corinth, the ambitions of Aratos, the problems of Cyrene—fell the death of Ptolemy II, on 29 January 246. The effect of the crises, and the stages they had reached, was to leave the succession in Egypt uncontested either internally or by anyone outside. Antigonos was fully preoccupied in Greece; as was Antiochos in Asia. But a new Ptolemaic king meant new policies, and given the actions of both rulers in the past few years the likelihood of a new war with the Seleukids was obviously very high.

34 Trogus, *Prologue* 26.
35 Plut., *Aratos* 15.3.
36 Walbank in CAH VII, 1, 247–248.

This might not seem unusual, but there was a new element in this situation by the 240s. Both kingdoms had found it impossible to win decisively in the Second War, which was one reason it went on for six years. Both had then, in their own ways, made strenuous efforts to increase their power in preparation for another war. Ptolemy had squeezed wealth from his subjects; Antiochos had fought in Thrace to the neglect of the eastern provinces, and even during the war he had been compelled to recognize the independence of Kappadokia and Pergamon. That is, both kingdoms were under great strain, and the new effort required by a new war could only increase that strain. The position had been reached where one or other kingdom might finally go down to a serious defeat, if only its opponent could exert the last ounce of pressure. It was clearly a very dangerous situation, for it was not obvious which of them was under the greatest strain.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# THE THIRD WAR, THE 'WAR OF LAODIKE'

Ptolemy III, called Euergetes, the eldest surviving son of Ptolemy II, was crowned pharaoh the day after his father's death, that is, on 29 or 30 January 246.[1] From this it would seem that the death was not unexpected. Euergetes was obviously present at the court, and the full ceremonial of the transfer of power was ready to be performed as soon as the old king was dead. Even though no challenge to his succession was made Ptolemy Euergetes must have been apprehensive. He was as yet untried in administration so far as we know, not having had the experience of being joint king which had helped his father to power. On the other hand, his father had not had such a messy family life as Ptolemy I; although Ptolemy II was notorious for his many mistresses and concubines, he had ensured that few of his children other than those of his first marriage survived.[2] His marriage to his sister had been childless, and he did not remarry after her death in 270—judging by his numerous mistresses, he had no need to.

Ptolemy III will have been concerned at the three regions of possible trouble he inherited. In Syria there was no disturbance. But Antiochos II had by this time returned to Laodike—she is referred to as his 'wife' in a Babylonian document of 248.[3] Berenike stayed in Antioch with her child. Antiochos was living in Ephesos in 246,[4] and the implication of these junctions and separations was that Laodike's sons would soon be reinstated as heirs to the kingship, if in fact Antiochos and the court had ever had any doubt over the matter. The eldest son, Seleukos, was now about eighteen years old, and so he was old enough to be an active and ruling king.

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[1] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 46, and note 71.

[2] His descendant Ptolemy VIII made a list of these ladies in an account he compiled, called *Hypomnemata*: *FGrH* 234, F 4.

[3] Sachs and Hunger –247. The diary is fragmentary, and the words 'Laodike, the wife' are all that exists on that particular line. It may be that the diarist did not understand the exact marital situation, or perhaps he believed that no divorce had occurred, but the wording is indicative nonetheless.

[4] App. *Syr*., 65

The greatest problem, of course, was that the death of Ptolemy II obviated any political agreements with Antiochos, and war with either Antiochos or Antigonos must have been thought likely, possibly with both, since Antigonos and Ptolemy II had been contending at some distance from each other in the Aegean and Greece. It is here that we should locate the battle of Andros, a naval conflict in which the Ptolemaic commander, Opron, was defeated by Antigonos, who is referred to as 'the old man' in the main source.[5] The date of this battle is another notorious problem, but 246 is the least unlikely of all the several suggestions. There was no actual war between the two kings at the time that we know of, but it may be that it was a clash which happened because Opron was attempting something off his own bat. The actual supreme commander was Ptolemy Andromachou, perhaps a half-brother of Ptolemy III,[6] under whom Opron was probably the tactical commander.[7] It is unlikely that either side had a fleet of any size; and it is probable that the battle was brought on partly by accident, perhaps by the Ptolemaic force pushing forward to try to assist Alexandros. It may also be that Antigonos, who was certainly in command,[8] was taking the opportunity of the death of Ptolemy II and the accession of Ptolemy III to strike quickly; given the date of Ptolemy III's accession, in the winter, if 246 is the correct year for the battle, it was certainly against Ptolemy III's fleet that Antigonos fought. The result of the battle seems to have been minimal; the extinction of the small Ptolemaic influence in the Kyklades may well be the only one.[9] (The concentration of conditionals and speculatives in this paragraph is an indication of the problems of this subject.)

Here was a problem which could therefore be ignored. Antigonos was preoccupied with Corinth and recovering his control of central Greece, while Ptolemy III lost nothing essential by the defeat, annoying though it probably was. It had little or nothing to do with his relations with the Seleukid state; this was much a more important matter, and by the summer of 246, much more urgent.

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[5] Trogus, *Prologue* 27; Plut. *Pelopidas*, 2.

[6] *P. Haun* 6, for which see A. Bulow-Jacobsen, 'P. Haun 6: a new look at the original', *ZPE* 36, 1979, 91–96.

[7] A.N. Oikonomides, 'Opron and the Sea-battle of Andros, a note in Ptolemaic History and Prosopography', *ZPE* 56, 1984, 151–152.

[8] Plut., *Pelopidas* 2.

[9] G. Reger, 'The Political history of the Kyklades, 260–200 BC', *Historia* 43, 1994, 32–69.

Ptolemy Euergetes, however, did act to eliminate one possible problem. In Cyrenaica, an accommodation with the aspirations of the Greek cities was reached. Berenike, Ptolemy's wife, coined there in her own name for some time, thus acting as queen in Cyrenaica in succession to Magas, her father. In fact the date of her marriage to Ptolemy is not clear; it may have been either shortly before or a little after his accession to Egypt. The cities were organised into a league, a *koinon*, as was fashionable in old Greece at that time. This diminished the influence of Cyrene, the main city, which was now constrained by the smaller cities. Money was spent on developing all the cities—the port of Berenike (Benghazi), Arsinoe at Taucheira, while Barke was refounded as Ptolemais—so that the whole region took on a strong Ptolemaic colouring. A Libyarch was appointed; the Ptolemaic system was for the governors to be appointed, rather than the more cooperative notion personified in the Seleukid *epistatai*; the title suggests that the officer's main concern was to keep the Libyan tribes under control.[10]

Euergetes' major concern, well above either of the situations in the Aegean and Cyrenaica, must have been the prospect of a war with Antiochos II. And Antiochos might well have been preparing an attack. He was a well-experienced commander, he had, in his view, a good case to fight for, and he faced a king newly enthroned, which was a situation always difficult. Antiochos' prime concern had always been in the Aegean region; in the summer of 246 he was at Ephesos, living with Laodike, and with her two sons with him. But there he died. The death happened in June or July, according to the Babylonian diarist.[11]

He was reputedly murdered, poisoned by Laodike,[12] but poisoning is so frequently cited as a cause of death by ancient historians that all it really means is that they did not really know what had caused Antiochos' death. Natural causes, such as age (he was nearly fifty) or illness (the Ionian coast, in a city, in summer, was never the healthiest place), are much more likely. But when he died the issue of the succession arose in a way it had not at Alexandria only six months earlier. Both his eldest son Seleukos (by Laodike) and his youngest, Antiochos (by Berenike),

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10 A. Laronde, *Cyrène et la Libye hellénistique*, Paris 1987, 382–415; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 46–47.

11 Sachs and Hunger −246, −245. The news took some time to reach the diarist. He completed one tablet in 'Month VI', which is August; the next tablet he annotated 'Month I–IV king Antiochos, Month V–VI king Seleukos'.

12 App. *Syr*., 65; Phylarchos, *FGrH* 81 F 24 = Athenaios 13.593c; Jerome, *In Danielam* XI.6.

were put forward as kings, supported by their respective mothers. (It is this dispute, of course, with its scenario of ambitious mothers, together with the presumed divorce from Laodike, which is at the origin of the poisoning assumption.)

In this dispute the advantage was overwhelmingly with Laodike. She could claim Antiochos II's intentions had been vouchsafed to her, which is highly likely, and that he had named Seleukos as his choice; her son was old enough to rule and was a capable man. And she had the advantage of time; Berenike would not hear of Antiochos' death for some time, and by then Seleukos would be acting as king in much of Asia Minor. Berenike, on the other hand, was promoting a child, who was probably less than five years old, and she had been separated from her husband the king for some time, a clear sign that he had favoured Laodike. The main factor in the result, however, was that Laodike had supporters in Antioch, Berenike's centre of operations, whereas Berenike had none anywhere in the kingdom except Antioch, and in particular she had no supporters anywhere near Laodike.

In Antioch Berenike had enough support to ensure the proclamation of her son as the next king, and used a small Seleukid naval force which was available in Seleukeia to appeal to her brother for assistance, and to make a first attempt to extend her and her son's authority into Kilikia.

At Soloi a treasure which was kept in the acropolis was secured and brought to Antioch. The governor of Kilikia, Aribazos, resisted this, but the citizens of Soloi helped Berenike's troops. Aribazos escaped, only to be killed in an ambush by mountain tribesmen when trying to cross the Taurus to reach Laodike and Seleukos. It would seem that Berenike was able therefore to establish a tenuous authority in Kilikia as well as Syria.

This information comes from an official report compiled by or for Ptolemy III.[13] It shows that Berenike's cause was acceptable to some, but also that such support as she had was patchy and relied on the actions of occasional men, often with their own axes to grind, and the presence of forces acting in Berenike's—or rather her son Antiochos'—name. King Ptolemy sent more than one small squadron to investigate the situation, presumably from Cyprus, or perhaps sailing north from Tyre or Sidon. One, commanded by an officer called Andriskos, captured a city, though which one is unclear. Meanwhile Ptolemy with a larger naval force had sailed, probably from Egypt, as far as Posideion, a minor port north of

[13] *P. Gurob* = Austin 266; for the latest examination cf. F. Piejko, 'Episodes from the Third Syrian War in a Gurob Papyrus, 246 BC', *AfP* 36, 1990, 13–27.

Laodikeia on the Syrian coast, where he waited for word that all was arranged for his landing in Syria; the target city in the first place will have been Seleukeia-in-Pieria, which is probably the place Andriskos had gone to.

This was not an expedition of conquest. Ptolemy's naval force may well have been bigger than any Seleukid force—he could not in the end get all his ships into Seleukeia harbour—but he did not have a large army with him, and certainly nothing powerful enough to besiege and take a city. The little expedition of Pythagoras and Aristokles, which went to Kilikia on Berenike's behalf, relied for the capture of Soloi on an internal insurrection, and even then the governor Aribazos escaped. Ptolemy's plan was clearly much the same, but applied to Syria: advance by persuasion, and with local acceptance.

These episodes show that the Seleukid kingdom was in considerable disarray. For a state which was essentially the personal creation of one man, and was held together only by the actions of the king and by loyalty to him, to have a dispute about the succession was to destroy its very existence. Men such as Aribazos had to make personal decisions about which pretender to support, for there was no overall loyalty to the state as an entity. Cities and smaller communities had to make the same, individual, decisions. Kildara, a small Karian city not far from Mylasa, had been in the borderland between the two kingdoms. Ptolemy held most of the coast, and Antiochos II had been advancing his power over the interior, as he did by the foundation of Stratonikea. Kildara had apparently been inclined to the Seleukid side—Mylasa and the sanctuary at Labraunda close by had been under Seleukid authority—but in the disorder of the succession dispute the citizens now inclined towards Ptolemy. They sent four men as ambassadors to the local Ptolemaic official, a man called Tlepolemos, a notable man, an Olympic victor and a member of a senior Ptolemaic family, and effectively put the city under his protection.[14] The borders of the two kingdoms, where they rubbed against each other, must have seen this sort of movement among many weak or threatened or fearful communities.

Ptolemy had to be careful in Syria, since there was no sign that any of those in the Syrian region were really anxious to be conquered or incorporated into the Ptolemaic state. So long as he kept the dispute to one which concerned the Seleukid royal succession he could count

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[14] W. Blumel, 'Ein Brief ptolemäischen Ministers Tlepolemos an die Stadt Kildara in Karien', *Ep. Anat* 20, 1992, 127–133 = Austin 267.

on some support being generated for his sister's cause, especially in the Seleukis of Syria, where she was a familiar presence, and where she had accumulated some support before his arrival. So he had to make his visit one to his sister, presumably, and he had to arrive with little more than a personal escort. Many of the ships he used no doubt came from Cyprus, but he will also have had to sail from Alexandria first—he had been in Alexandria at the end of January, when he was crowned; there was no reason for him to have left that city, other than to go into Egypt, before the crisis in Syria blew up, so he will have sailed north along the Palestinian coast. One place he called at was Arados, which came under his control for some time, at least judging by the fact that the Aradian mint produced Ptolemaic coins for some time after 246.[15]

This, therefore, was not yet a war. The accident of the survival of the vivid description of the expedition, written either by Ptolemy himself or in his name, apparently as a report to his family and government in Alexandria,[16] has pulled attention almost exclusively to events in Syria. But Ptolemy had a great fleet, and it is not to be expected that he would neglect this opportunity for making trouble for Laodike and Seleukos while he was helping Berenike. Another political move took place in the Aegean, where Ephesos was seized by a Seleukid commander in the city called Sophron, and delivered into the control of Ptolemy. The story, as it is told, has Sophron involved in a romantic escapade in which his *coup* was the only way out of his personal problems (though this is from Phylarchos, an historian notorious for such personal explanations for great events). Thus it may well have been an independent action, taking advantage of the confusion surrounding the death of Antiochos II, just as Ptolemy Epigonos and Timarchos had seized power in Ephesos and Miletos when Antiochos I died. Sophron, thus, by this interpretation, only handed over Ephesos to Ptolemy later.[17] Certainly this must have taken place after Laodike and the new King Seleukos II had left the city, though Sophron's *inamorata* was a lady of the court. Antiochos died in June or July; Sophron's *coup* must have taken place several months later, perhaps in the autumn. Meanwhile Laodike and her sons had

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[15] F. Duryat, *Arados hellénistique, Etude historique et Monétaire*, Beirut 2005, 229–232.

[16] It is not clear who the author is, though the suggestion is that it was a worked-up version of a campaign diary; it is also not clear exactly who it was aimed at—the Ptolemaic court, to enhance the reputation of the king, Egypt generally (but especially the Greek speakers), or even the Seleukid population.

[17] Phylarchos *FGrH* 81 F 24 = Athenaios 13.593c–d; the confusion between Sophron and Opron being resolved (cf Oikonomides, note 7), Sophron's role becomes clearer.

presumably moved east to be closer to the main action in Syria. It is in this very period that we must place Antigonos' naval victory at Andros. The crisis in the Seleukid kingdom will have frightened Antigonos as much as it encouraged Ptolemy, and he no doubt acted in the Aegean to reduce Ptolemy's local naval power while he still had the chance. In the circumstances Ptolemy, seeing the possibility of a much greater prize available in Syria could afford to ignore the defeat. Later, of course, it was too late to reverse it.

The approach of Ptolemaic power, and still more the presence of Ptolemy himself, exerted pressure on all Seleukid citizens in northern Syria. The advance parties made contact with Seleukid officials and city magistrates, initially in the ports opposite Cyprus such as Laodikeia and Seleukeia. The news of these contacts, transmitted to Antioch and the palace there, presumably stimulated action by both Seleukid parties. Laodike, or Seleukos,[18] was by now in contact with two of her partisans in Antioch and urged them to kill both Berenike and her son. These men were named by Porphyry as Ikadion and Gennaios, identified as 'the rulers of Antioch', a remarkably vague phrase.[19] They carried out Laodike's wishes.

The deaths of the queen and the infant king are described by Polyainos, in a curious tale of multiple substitutions.[20] First the boy was killed, but a substitute was put in his place; then Berenike was killed by her Galatian guard, but one of her ladies was used as a substitute for her, it being given out that the queen had been wounded and was confined to her bed. The problem with all this is that the child now disappears from the story, and the guardsmen apparently kept silent about their murder, which is rather unlikely—unless they had also been killed, but this is not reported. What seems definite is that both mother and child were dead, and that this was concealed. Polyainos' story is clearly an imaginative elaboration of the events, no doubt developed sometime later. Porphyry's account of an assassination instigated by Laodike through her partisans in Antioch is probably to be preferred. It was in no one's interest, neither Seleukos' nor Ptolemy's partisans, to announce the deaths, for this would only incite further trouble in the city—Seleukos' people feared a *coup* by Ptolemy; Ptolemy did not have the power locally to carry one out. The murderers

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18 Justin 27.1.1–2, lays the responsibility on Seleukos.
19 Porphyry *FGrH* 260 F 43.
20 Polyainos, *Stratagems* 8.50.

would be the first victims, and Berenike's partisans, especially those who came from Egypt with her, had now to look to Ptolemy for rescue and revenge.

Ptolemy received assurances of a welcome at Seleukeia-in-Pieria by the citizens and the city governors through his advance party there, and sailed with part of his fleet from Posideion north to the city. A normal royal welcome had been prepared; 'the priests, the magistrates, the other citizens, the officers and the soldiers were all wearing crowns and came to meet us at the harbour'.[21] This was not necessarily a manifestation of enthusiasm or a transfer of royalty, since Ptolemy was still assumed to be paying a visit to his sister and his nephew; the greeting he received was thus a sign of local loyalty to the infant king and a gesture of respect for a visiting king. Ptolemy went up to Antioch, where he was similarly greeted, to his amazement, so it was claimed in the papyrus account.[22] When he got to the palace, however, he found that his sister and her child were dead.

Ptolemy was therefore faced with the need to develop a new purpose to justify his presence in Syria. He could no longer claim to be supporting his nephew's rights to the kingdom—though he does seem to have maintained this pretence for a little longer, assisted by the original concealment of the deaths. The Seleukid crisis had been one concerning the royal succession, and without the child Antiochos or Berenike the crisis would fade away, and most Seleukid subjects would probably shift to support Seleukos II when the truth came out. Yet Ptolemy, in occupation of his family's enemy's main Syrian cities, was not going to give up the great chance to inflict serious, possibly permanent, damage on the Seleukid kingdom. It is at this point that Ptolemy's expedition became a war. (And it is about this time that we may place the treason of Sophron at Ephesos.)

By not revealing the deaths of Berenike and Antiochos Ptolemy gained some time, which was no doubt used to build up his forces within that part of Syria he had already occupied. He had been greeted in Antioch by those Seleukid officials who were present in the city; they included 'satraps and the other officers and priests, the boards of magistrates', or so the papyrus account claimed. Their submission to him neutralized them as sources of opposition for the time being, and he was able to occupy the rest of Syria and Kilikia, as far to the east as the Euphrates River. He

[21] Cf Piejko (note 12) 21–22.
[22] *P. Gurob*, col. 2.

had with him 'a force of infantry and cavalry, fleet, and elephants from' Africa,[23] which is a much greater force than he had arrived with on his 'visit' earlier. He had therefore been reinforced. The land forces were no doubt brought up from the Ptolemaic garrisons in Koile Syria, which will have been reinforced and alerted when the Seleukid crisis developed, and probably from Egypt as well. He secured control of the Seleukid elephant corps, which was based at Apameia,[24] and no doubt as many of the Seleukid naval vessels as he could seize, though this will have been a fairly minor matter for the man who controlled the greatest fleet in the Mediterranean; disarming Seleukos will have been a secondary object of the operation.

No doubt at some point in the eastern operations it became known that the king in whose name they were being conducted was dead, as was his mother. There is no hint that Ptolemy III had yet resolved the dilemma he was in. Ptolemaic policy towards the Seleukid kingdom had always been, since 301, to fend off any claims or attacks without making any serious attempt to seize control of more than the odd city; Ptolemaic invasions of the north had been spoiling attacks or distracting moves. Neither Ptolemy I nor II had been interested in conquering northern Syria—after all Ptolemy's case in the dispute was that he and Seleukos I had each been entitled to his share of the spoils, by which he implied that Seleukos held North Syria by the same 'right' as he held the southern parts. But now Ptolemy III had occupied—the operation was scarcely a 'conquest'—one of the heartlands of the enemy kingdom, effectively cutting it in two and separating Asia Minor and Babylonia. In theory he could have annexed northern Syria and Kilikia, placing his northern boundary along the crest of the Taurus Mountains and his eastern along the line of the Euphrates. This would have damaged the Seleukid state so severely that it is unlikely that it could have survived as a single state.

Ptolemy, however, went further. Possibly he had discarded his dynasty's restraint for the present; possibly he really did think he could become a new Alexander, and conquer an empire from the Hellespont to India. Maybe he simply could not stop once he had begun to occupy parts of the Seleukid state. He crossed the Euphrates and moved to the east. The Adulis inscription claims that he 'subdued' all the Seleukid lands as far

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23 *OGIS* 54 = Austin 268.
24 Ibid.

as Baktria.[25] This is generally doubted, not only because the statement is extremely vague, but above all because Baktria was separated from the rest of the kingdom by independent Parthia by this date, and Parthia is not mentioned. Another source, not quite so partial to Ptolemy, states that he travelled as far as Babylon,[26] which is quite possible; it would be a pleasant feeling for King Ptolemy to occupy yet another name-city of Seleukos, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, and to stroll through the streets of great Babylon. On the other hand, there is no reference to his presence, or to any recognition of the boy Antiochos, in the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries. Admittedly this is a fragmentary source (but so are most of those for these events), but it goes straight from 'King Antiochos' in the first half of the year to 'King Seleukos' without a break. The only indication of trouble is in the comment in that same year that 'fear was in the land'. Though this is, in a sense, negative evidence, it is to be counted against the summary in Appian (four centuries later) that Ptolemy 'advanced as far as Babylon'.[27]

On his retirement from whatever easternmost point he reached, Ptolemy appointed a governor for Mesopotamia, which is the region between the Euphrates and Tigris in their middle stretches, but not for Babylonia, which is the southern area of the Land of the Two Rivers. I conclude that Ptolemy crossed the Euphrates but did not reach Babylon. It seems unlikely that he faced any armed opposition in this promenade. He claimed to have received the submission of the satraps and governors of the eastern provinces from Mesopotamia to Baktria, but there seems no reason to believe him. The composer of the Adulis inscription certainly exaggerated, and probably relayed official inaccuracies as well.[28]

When he returned to Egypt Ptolemy made a great point of the loot he had gathered, and, as every Ptolemy who campaigned to the east

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[25] Ibid; a date of 245–243 has been suggested for this document because of the absence of Ptolemy's title of 'Euergetes', adopted in 243, though he is called 'Great King': H. Hauben, 'L'expedition de Ptolémée III en Orient et la sédition dynastique de 245 av. J.-C.', *AfP* 36, 1990, 29–37.

[26] App., *Syr*. 65.

[27] Sachs and Hunger −245; App., *Syr*. 65.

[28] Considerable reliance has in the past been placed on the date of a document from Uruk, published in A.T. Clay, *Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan, II: Legal Document from Erech dated in the Seleukid Era (312–65 BC)*, New York 1913, 17; this gives Seleukos II as king in July 245. The implication was that between July 246 and July 245 various kings—the boy Antiochos, Ptolemy III, Seleukos II—could have been recognised. The absence of either of the first two from the Astronomical Diaries seems decisive.

did, stated that he had 'sought out all the sacred objects removed from Egypt by the Persians and brought them back', claiming them to number 2,500.[29] This is a more credible claim than others of this type, for Ptolemy really had been close to the lands to which the Persians had taken their earlier loot. But this was not why he returned to Egypt.

Within the Seleukid kingdom Seleukos II, his mother Laodike, and his brother Antiochos Hierax had not been directly affected by the events in Syria. There was trouble, of course, in Ephesos, which ended with the city falling under Ptolemaic control, though how long this transition took is unknown, and places such as Kildara turned for protection to the local Ptolemaic authority. Seleukos II, however, was king, and there appears to have been no challenge to his authority in interior Asia Minor. Indeed, Seleukos was able to gather a fleet from the regions which recognised him, which were the cities of the Ionian, Thracian and Straits coasts, plus perhaps Pamphylia. He set off to combat Ptolemy in Syria, but his fleet was wrecked in a storm. Justin, no doubt with the usual exaggeration, claims he was left with 'nothing beyond his naked body, his life, and a few companions'.[30] He would not be able to find another fleet, even if the one he lost had been big enough to challenge Ptolemy's in the first place.

Ptolemy withdrew back into Syria from his eastern stroll, and at some point he heard that there was trouble in Egypt. This is described as a '*seditio*' by two later sources, though this is not very specific.[31] It has been assumed that this means that there was a peasant rebellion, but it has also been pointed out that Egyptian sources do not really suggest that anything out of the ordinary was going on, though how wide the author's knowledge went is not certain.[32] It seems that whatever was happening in political terms, the problem was aggravated by a low Nile, which always caused trouble. Distress was relieved by importing grain from other Ptolemaic lands.[33] But a '*seditio*' must mean something reasonably serious, something more than the rural banditry which was the constant background to life in the ancient world, and there had been nothing of

29 Porphyry *FGrH* 260 F 43.

30 Justin 27.2.2; it may have been the resulting distortion of the naval balance in the Aegean which encouraged Opron to challenge Gonatos' fleet at Andros; one would very much like to know the exact dates of all these events, and their interconnections.

31 Jerome, *In Danielam* 11.7.9; Justin 27.1.9.

32 The source in question is *P. Hibeh* II, 198, which includes copies of decrees and laws concerning public order; as ever, crime catches the attention, but seems to have been fairly rural in Egypt.

33 Canopus decree = Austin 271, lines 14–19.

this sort since Ptolemy I became satrap, so something clearly happened.[34] Yet, once again, this is not necessarily the reason why Ptolemy returned to Egypt from his Asian expedition, though it undoubtedly assisted him to the decision, and may well have been the publicly announced reason.

Ptolemy had to make a decision about what he was to do with the territories he was now occupying: Syria, Kilikia and Mesopotamia. The choices were only two: hold or abandon. If he held on to a large area such as Syria, he would be involving himself in a major war against Seleukos II, who evidently was a reasonably capable operator, despite the shipwreck, and whose authority in Asia Minor had not been seriously shaken. Perhaps also, since the death of Berenike and her son became known, Ptolemy had seen that the population was basically loyal to the Seleukid dynasty. He would need to explain why, having arrived to support his sister and her son, he had now switched to annexing the lands she and he had ruled. By taking over Syria and adding it to his lands he would also be altering the geographical balance of his kingdom and changing its character. The Ptolemaic centre of power was Egypt, a land where the Greek and Macedonian inhabitants were administrators and soldiers, and where they were settlers living on their rural estates. Seleukid Syria was a new Macedon, a country divided among almost a dozen Macedonian-type cities, and populated by large numbers of Greeks and Macedonians. If Ptolemy was to field an army of Greek and Macedonian soldiers drawn from this source, this would be a major enhancement to his power, but he could not rule northern Syria in the way Egypt was ruled, or even in the way Palestine was ruled, where the Ptolemaic government was fairly heavy-handed. It would need close and constant attention—but then so did Egypt, as the trouble—the '*seditio*'—now demonstrated. That is, he would find it very difficult to hold both.

Further, by annexing the cities of North Syria, he would be challenging Seleukos II to take them back. Many of them were named for Seleukos' family; they were a large part of his inheritance; he would necessarily fight to recover them. The war would be long and difficult for both kingdoms, and Ptolemy in particular would find that he had to squeeze still more wealth out of Egypt to pay for it—or tax his new conquests severely for the same purpose, which would be even more counterproductive than in Egypt. And to annex north Syria would alter the whole basis of

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[34] The episode is discussed in several articles, notably now by Viesse, 3–5; see also B.C. McGing, 'Revolt Egyptian Style: Internal Opposition to Ptolemaic Rule', *AfP* 43, 1997, 273–314 at 274–277.

Ptolemaic rule. Yet the temptation of annexation surely existed, even if it went against all the policies of the Ptolemaic kingdom. These had always been defensive—once the kingdom had been constituted, at least—and the only annexations had been defensive. Ptolemy III's expedition had accomplished a great deal, for he had brought about the collapse of the great rival, which would mean it was counted out, he must have thought, for the next generation.

So, having collected large quantities of loot—'40,000' talents worth, he claimed, together with the '2,500' Egyptian statues[35]—Ptolemy evacuated much of Seleukid Syria without fighting for it. Of course, in the process he abandoned his partisans in the cities, some of whom, no doubt, left with him to live in Egypt. He did take two traditional measures, one as a symbol of victory, the other as a means to delay any Seleukid recovery.

The first was to hold on to the city of Seleukeia-in Pieria. He could hardly have chosen a more symbolic prize, the city named for the founder of the dynasty, in which the tombs of the kings were situated, and in which the Seleukid fleet was based—though that fleet, together with the elephants, was probably another of his prizes. Given his great naval superiority it cannot have been difficult to subdue the island city of Arados, which had been without its *peraia* since 259, even though it had a good deal of autonomy. The sign of its Ptolemaic subjection is the coins it minted on the Ptolemaic standard, for perhaps two years or so.[36] That the city reverted to Seleukid coinage by 243 or 242 is an indication that it was more comfortable in the Seleukid kingdom—it was to negotiate another agreement with Seleukos II in the latter year.

The other measure Ptolemy took on his withdrawal was to appoint governors of 'trans-Euphrates' and Kilikia, respectively Xanthippos and Antiochos, which may mean he intended to hold at least parts of these two lands, though he may only have been appointing men to govern temporarily.[37] These men would at least be able to hinder the recovery of Seleukos' authority locally, and Ptolemy left garrisons in his conquests,[38] though they evaporated quickly enough when Seleukos applied pressure. Ptolemy therefore aimed to hold on to Syria and Mesopotamia at least for some time, blocking communications between Seleukos' two bases in Asia Minor and Babylonia, but as a ploy it turned out to be only

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[35] Jerome, *In Danielam* 11.7–9.
[36] See note 15.
[37] Jerome, *In Danielam* 11.7–9.
[38] *P. Haun* 6 = Bulow-Jacobsen (note 6).

short-term—only Seleukeia-in-Pieria was retained in the end. This strategy is very similar to that adopted by Ptolemy's father in 260–257, using the invasion and occupation of Seleukid Syria to preoccupy the enemy but with no real intention of permanent conquest.

Once the decision to abandon most of northern Syria to the Seleukids was made, Ptolemy could return to Egypt, where the sedition, whatever it was, was clearly suppressed quickly. From there he could direct the continuation of the war, into which the original intervention had evolved, in the traditional areas of Ptolemaic interest—Kilikia, Lykia, and the Aegean. In particular he appears to have concentrated on those territories which had been taken by Antiochos II in the previous war, and those acquired by Antiochos since that war ended. So Ephesos and Miletos returned to Ptolemy's control, as did the island of Samos, retaken by 245. The dates of the recovery of other cities and places are usually not clear, for the evidence is normally the dating of inscriptions providing evidence of imperial Ptolemaic control while actually dealing with some other matter altogether, and so they were produced some time after Ptolemy's forces arrived. But these places were all under Ptolemy's control later, and the war is the obvious occasion for the change.[39]

The Seleukid advances into the Hellespont region in the latter years of the reign of Antiochos II were countered by Ptolemy's establishment of control over several small cities in that same region. The Adulis inscription claims that Ptolemy III conquered 'Thrace and the Hellespontine region', but, as with the claims elsewhere in that document, this is to be taken only as an indication that some territorial advance was made in the region, not a blanket conquest. The cities of Ainos and Maroneia, on the north Aegean coast to the west of the Chersonese, were Ptolemy's by the late 240s. It seems that the Spartan Hippomedon son of Agesilaos, employed by Ptolemy as his governor in the area, had a long stint in office there, being recorded as active at Ainos in 242 and still—or again—in 219.[40] It is therefore likely that Ptolemy III was acting in the period of peace following the end of the war in 241 in much the same way as Antiochos II in the peace period of 253–246: having established a position, he intrigued and expanded Ptolemaic control where he could, and these acquisitions were mainly made during the war. The neighbouring city at Maroneia is recorded as having a Ptolemaic governor called Epinikos

[39] Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, is the source for much of this section.

[40] P.M. Fraser, *Samothrace*, Inscriptions 39–40 and Polybios 4.35.13; *P. Tebtunis* 8; Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 160–161.

about 242.[41] Several places in the region show traces of Ptolemaic activity without necessarily implying control either of them or of the whole area: Sestos and Kypsela in particular. But Kypsela, which had been captured by Antiochos II. actually came to be ruled by a dynast, Adaios.[42] Both Ptolemaic influence and dynastic independence imply the removal of Seleukid control. Lysimacheia was the great civic prize in the region, but it does not seem to have fallen to Ptolemy's rule.

This work in the north was accomplished by the king's half brother, Ptolemy Andromachou, a son of Ptolemy II by one of his mistresses, one of the few to have survived. He is explicitly stated to have conquered Ainos.[43] Since this was governed by Hippomedon by 242/241, the conquest had taken place between 246 and 242. It is probably this man who was able to gain control of Ephesos as well, when Sophron rebelled against Seleukos II; but he was then the man in ultimate command of the Ptolemaic fleet which was defeated by Antigonos Gonatas at Andros in 245. (Opron was perhaps detached, or in tactical command.) He had recruited soldiers in Thrace (just as Antiochos II had); they later turned on him and killed him.[44]

Seleukos, having recovered from his shipwreck and suffered the loss of Ephesos and the Seleukid parts of Thrace, spent some time preparing for a new expedition to Syria. He is recorded in an inscription from Smyrna as crossing into the Seleukis in 244. (Smyrna was at the time fighting a local war against Magnesia-ad-Sipylos next door, which had rebelled in pursuit of independence; Smyrna was loyal.[45]) Once he reached Syria Seleukos was slowly successful, though it took several years to remove the Ptolemaic presence from most of the cities. Only fragments of information can be gleaned from the (as usual) poor sources. It is possible that Seleukos II suffered a defeat in battle first, but this is qualified by the statement that he then 'fled in panic to Antioch'; that is, he controlled the city before the battle. Numismatists suggest that he was able to mint coins in Antioch from 244.[46] The exact sequence of events is not recoverable, but the implication at least is of fighting in Syria with Seleukos finally prevailing in most of the country, the exception being Seleukeia.[47]

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41 Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.* 161 and note 4.
42 *P. Haun* 6 = Bulow-Jacobsen (note 6).
43 Ibid.
44 Athenaios 13.593a–b.
45 *OGIS* 229.
46 Houghton, *Seleucid Coins*, 229
47 Justin 27.2.5.

Xanthippos the governor of 'trans-Euphrates', and Antiochos in Kilikia are never heard of again. Seleukos had set about in a reasonably pragmatic fashion to recover control of his inheritance. He was able in 244 to found a city—significantly called 'Kallinikon' ('glorious victory')—on the Euphrates where it is joined by the Balikh River. This is perhaps a sign of his expulsion of Xanthippos from Mesopotamia and the recovery of control over northern Syria, and quite possibly it was the place where he won a decisive victory,[48] though whether this took place before or after the recovery of Antioch is not known.

Seleukos had left Asia Minor under the nominal rule of his younger brother, Antiochos Hierax, though perhaps it was their mother Laodike who was the moving spirit. (The war is called 'the war of Laodike' in an inscription from the city of Priene, which is perhaps the perspective it had from western Asia Minor.[49]) Seleukos himself naturally concentrated on recovering lost territory in Syria, but he was also able to mount an invasion of Ptolemaic Koile Syria. He captured the town of Orthosia, the first substantial place south of the Eleutheros River along the coast road. He is recorded as fighting in the Damascus area, and he may have taken the city briefly.[50] These exploits may have taken place in 242. Seleukos had clearly by the time he invaded Koile Syria recovered much of the north, and presumably his purpose was to conquer territory to offset the loss of Seleukeia—Damascus would surely be a worthwhile exchange.

The year 242 was also the time when Seleukos recovered authority over Arados, which had been minting coins in Ptolemy's name for a couple of years, and which had therefore acknowledged his authority. This gave the city more leeway, for Seleukos, without a navy, was helpless to reach it, though he could certainly damage the *peraia*. But since he wished to invade Koile Syria, he could not afford to leave the island-city in Ptolemaic hands behind him. The result was another agreement between the king and the city, in which the city expanded its autonomy and extended its authority over the *peraia* once more.[51] Hence Seleukos was able to invade Phoenicia and attack Orthosia, and go on, perhaps through the Bekaa Valley, to assault and capture Damascus.

He was driven out again, but he had recovered most of his losses. Meanwhile in Asia Minor his brother was manifesting signs of an itch for

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48 *Chronicon Paschale* I, 330.
49 *I. Priene* 37.
50 Eusebios, *Chronographia*. 1.251.
51 Strabo 16.2.14 = Schmitt 3.491.

independence. It will have become clear to him that a decisive victory was not possible so long as Ptolemy maintained his overall defensive attitude and was also capable of picking off posts and cities here and there by the use of his fleet.

Peace made in 241, supposedly for ten years, a detail which is unlikely, and not attested for any other Seleukid-Ptolemaic treaty.[52] The terms of the treaty are not attested in any source, so they can only be deduced from the increased holdings of Ptolemy evidenced later. He had clearly won the war as a whole, and was able to hold on to whatever he considered necessary for the continued security of his kingdom. These turned out to be relatively small areas: Ephesos, Miletos, and Samos in Ionia, the Thracian cities of Ainos and Maroneia, some places such as Kildara in Karia and Lykia, several coastal towns in Pamphylia and Kilikia, and Seleukeia-in-Pieria in Syria.

The most important of these acquisitions, from the point of view of the Syrian Wars, was Seleukeia-in-Pieria,[53] though in other areas Ptolemaic domination of Thrace and the Hellespont was geostrategically of comparable importance. The retention of Seleukeia had serious consequences for the Seleukids in Syria. Some way to the south of the city, at the headland called Ras Ibn Hani, the Ptolemies maintained an armed post, marked by a stele put up by a group of Ptolemaic mercenaries;[54] south again was Laodikeia, now the only port city left under direct Seleukid control on the Syrian coast. And south again was the *peraia* of Arados, which had used the crisis of the war to extract more privileges from Seleukos II, one of which was that the city was now entitled to give refuge to people fleeing from, presumably, both Ptolemy and Seleukos.[55] In return it had reverted to Seleukid suzerainty, but the city with its *peraia* was very much a semi-detached component of the kingdom, at least in comparison to the other Syrian cities.

Ptolemy's retention of Seleukeia was a clear sign that fighting would resume at the next opportunity, either at the expiry of the ten-year treaty, if it really was time-limited, or when one of the kings died. (Possibly the ten-year limit reflected the uncertainty in the Seleukid kingdom as to who would be ruling in the future.) The city was too important to

52 Justin 27.2.9.

53 A. Jahne, 'Die "Syrische Frage", Seleukeia Pierien und die Ptolemaeer', *Klio* 56, 1974, 501–519.

54 J.-P. Rey-Coquais, 'Inscription grecque découverte à Ras Ibn Hani: stèle des mercenaires lagides sur la côte syrienne', *Syria* 55, 1978, 313–325, = Austin 273.

55 Grainger, *Cities* 90–94.

the Seleukid dynasty and to Syria, as a city and a port, for its loss to be accepted as permanent. The symbolic power of Seleukeia made it certain that a Seleukid king would sooner or later make its recovery his priority. Its retention had surely been the subject of anxious discussion at Ptolemy's court, where these points were no doubt fully understood. But the city was also a potent symbol for Ptolemy, of his success in his grand campaign—he now called himself 'Great King' and claimed to have conquered from Syria to India—and so it was a symbol of his personal military achievements. He took the epithet 'Euergetes', 'benefactor', as his personal title, but who exactly was benefiting is unclear. Certainly not the Seleukids, and, from the *seditio* in Egypt, it seems that the Egyptians did not think they were either.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## THE SELEUKID COLLAPSE

The Seleukid kingdom had been put together piece by piece, and it fell apart in the same way. Seleukos I had begun as satrap of Babylonia and, after losing that land for a time, had recovered it, and then quickly added Media, Susiana, and Persis to it. But it was then several more years before he took over the eastern provinces, centred on Baktria, and then Syria—the northern part. Asia Minor was added after another twenty years. Only twenty years later Baktria was in the hands of a satrap, Diodotos, who was soon cut off by the incursions of the Parni into Parthia. And during the reign of Seleukos II, two decades later still Diodotos' son made himself fully independent.

The history of the Central Asian region moved to its own rhythm, and it is perhaps better to see its inclusion within the Seleukid kingdom as a temporary aberration, a brief continuation of the Akhaimenid position. But it had also become clear that the Seleukid state as constituted in the mid-third century was incapable of holding on to other marginal areas besides Baktria. Attempts to conquer Bithynia had failed; Pontos similarly; Pergamon went from subject to independent city by means of victory in a single minor battle; Kappadokia became an independent kingdom. All these sections of Asia Minor were originally parts of Seleukos' share of the kingdoms of Antigonos and Lysimachos, but they could not be held. In part, of course, this was due to the Galatian incursions and raids, but even after these enemies were brought under some control, the 'lost' lands were unrecoverable. The marriages of Stratonike and Laodike, the daughters of Antiochos II, to the kings of Kappadokia and Pontos (Ariarathes III and Mithradates II), symbolized the independence of those kingdoms from the Seleukid state, as well as their attachment to its king. These relationships, of course, encircled the Galatians, and are obviously intended for that purpose. But the continued presence and independence of the Galatians within Asia Minor was still another indication of the basic Seleukid fragility.

These marriages also indicate one of the methods by which the Seleukid kings were dealing with the decline and shrinkage of their patrimony. By marrying daughters to these kings the new kingdoms were attached

in a loose way to the parent state, just as the intermarriages of Seleukids and Antigonids attached Macedon to the Seleukid interest. The linking of the family of Akhaios, who was probably the youngest son of Seleukos I, into the intermarriage scheme was of the same pattern. In Asia Minor, by the time of the reign of Seleukos II, the Seleukid family was linked by marriage to the Attalids, the Akhaiids and the Antigonids, and to the kings of Pontos and Kappadokia. The result was an intricate familial web covering much of Asia Minor, plus Macedon.[1]

This may have been an intended result, though the marriages were usually contacted for short-term political reasons and the overall structure simply emerged. One consequence was simultaneously to exalt those families which moved into the Seleukid system, and to reduce the social superiority of the Seleukids. The Akhaiids also married into the Seleukid family, the Attalids and the Mithradatids of Pontos. Seleukos II was the son of Laodike, who was an Akhaiid, and married Laodike, daughter of Andromachos, the son of the first Akhaios—she was also his cousin. The king was thus related by marriage to the Attalids, Ariarathes of Kappadokia, and Mithradates of Pontos—as well, of course, as the Antigonids of Macedon. In this process in Asia Minor the Seleukids became just one more ruling family, not the overall Great Kings they were in the rest of the kingdom.

Asia Minor also had the dynasts mentioned earlier—the Lysiads, Dokimos, Eupolemos, Olympichos—some of whom had faded away or died out, though others emerged. Karia was particularly fertile in such men, and in the 240s Olympichos was governor for the Seleukid king; he developed into an independent dynast, and he then linked himself with the Antigonids.[2] Nearby was Telmessos, now and possibly earlier the possession of Ptolemy son of Lysimachos, from whom the city descended in the possession of his family until 188.[3] These men and families did not marry into the more exalted and powerful royal families (at least so far as we know), but they were locally important and the kings had to take heed of them. Add to this the series of Ptolemaic posts and bases and cities

[1] This is a recurring pattern in Asia Minor, detectable in the Akhaimenid period (J.M. Cook, *The Persian Empire*, London 1983, 176–182) and in the Roman (J.D. Grainger, *Nerva and the Roman Succession Crisis of AD 96–98*, London 2003, ch. 7).

[2] J. Crampa, *Labraunda: Swedish Excavations and Researches* iii, 1, *The Greek Inscriptions*, part 1, Lund 1963, nos. 1, 3, 4.

[3] M. Segre, 'Iscrizioni di Licia, I, Tolomeo de Telmesso', *Clara Rhodos* 9, 1938, 81–208; M. Wörrle, 'Epigraphische Forschungen zur Geschichte Lykiens II. Ptolemaios II und Telmessos', *Chiron* 8, 1978, 201–246 = Austin 270.

along the west and south coasts, and the many cities whose allegiance was essentially to themselves, but who could be dominated, and Asia Minor was an enormously complex political region, fertile ground for both ambitious men and Great Power intrigues.

Asia Minor's mosaic of kingdoms and dynasts and cities was one in which Seleukid control could only be exercised through locally powerful men; these dynasts had to be conciliated constantly. The rest of the Seleukid kingdom was different, notably in the fact that the density of Greek settlement was, in most areas, much less than in Asia Minor. The economic heart of the kingdom was Babylonia, still, along with Egypt, the most productive land in the whole civilized world. It was also notably loyal to the Seleukid family, as Ptolemy III may have recently discovered. A few Greek-type cities had been installed in the region, notably the great city of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, but all Seleukid kings had been assiduous in paying generous attention to the old Babylonian gods, or rather to their temples and priesthoods, and the governors and commanders in the Babylonian cities were regularly involved in the religious ceremonials and observances.[4] Seleukos II had had no difficulty in maintaining control of the region in the crises of 246–245.

Iran was divided, as it had been since the time of the installation of Seleukid rule, but Seleukos II was able to hold on to the essentials, which were, first, the great road from Babylon through this Zagros Mountains and across the northern Iranian plateau towards Parthia and Baktria. This route was guarded by new cities, and by older cities remade in the Seleukid style, and by more isolated garrisons. The second area for control was in the southeast, Susiana and Persis, both of which also had the same combination of cities (Seleukeia-Susa, Antioch-in-Persis) and garrisons (as at Persepolis) which can be seen in the north. The land connection with Baktria had been severed by the Parni conquest of Parthia, of course, and Seleukos II had in his list of tasks the need to restore the link and his control of Baktria.

The old Akhaimenid region of Persis was one of the more politically delicate areas for Macedonians to rule, and local memories of Akhaimenid power and of Alexander's destructiveness remained strong. A sequence of coins was minted in the Persepolis area, probably at

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[4] A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White (eds), *Hellenism in the East: the Interaction of Greek and non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander*, London 1987, especially the articles by the two editors; S. Sherwin-White, 'Ritual for a Seleucid king at Babylon', *JHS* 103, 1983, 156–159.

Istakhr, which seems to have been the main settlement centre for Persis after the destruction of Persepolis. The coins have the old Akhaimenid administrative title of *frataraka* and are dated approximately to the later third century BC and after.[5] Their production suggests a degree of independence for the area, either under a dynasty of hereditary Seleukid governors, or under a local family which could be relied on by the Seleukid kings. Either way it was a local authority able to operate with some local power and with little more than token reference to the Seleukid king—very much, it would seem, like Baktria under the first Diodotos. At the same time the suggested dating in the later third century implies a loosening of Seleukid control at that time.

Beyond Iran, the interposition of the Parni into the Parthian satrapy left Baktria to fend for itself even during the reign of Antiochos II. When Seleukos II became king the Parthian conquest was only a year old,[6] and the Baktrian satrap Diodotos appears to have lived on for perhaps another decade. He was succeeded by his son, also Diodotos (II), and by that time the Seleukid connection had worn thin, so that the younger Diodotos apparently succeeded his father by hereditary right. He ceased to mint coins in the name of the Seleukid king, who, after all, had not appointed him. Whether it was publicly announced or not, Baktria had become an independent state.[7] It was, however, not one which had been accepted as such by the Seleukid king—unlike, for example, the Attalids in Pergamon or Ariarathes of Kappadokia. Here was yet another variation on the Seleukid governmental theme.

Into this variegated political system, in which each region was governed differently, Syria fitted as yet another region with its own idiosyncrasies. Its particular character was as a highly urbanized region in which the cities, being all Seleukid foundations, were of a less independent mind than those of Asia Minor (the exception being Arados, a Phoenician city, which thereby proves the case of the rest). It was much more densely urbanized than Iran, and much more Macedonian than Babylonia, but,

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[5] These were not certainly dated, the late third century or early second century BC being the period claimed: R.N. Frye, *The History of Achaemenid Iran*, Munich 1984, 161; J. Wiesehofer, *Ancient Persia*, London 1996, 109–111.

[6] K. Broderson, 'The Date of the Secession of Parthia from the Seleucid Kingdom', *Historia* 35, 1986, 378–381, argues for a later date, 238 BC, but the process was fairly lengthy, taking perhaps a decade, and the route was cut by the time the Third War began in 246.

[7] K.M. Holt, *Thundering Zeus, The Making of Hellenistic Bactria*, California 1999, 101–106.

like Iran, it was constantly under threat from outside, specifically from the sea (two invasions in twenty years) and from the land, where the Ptolemaic garrisons in Koile Syria were ominously close by.

Whether Seleukos I or Antiochos I ever intended to unify the kingdom by a more rigorous administration is perhaps unlikely, and was probably impossible, given the great variety of social and political systems they ruled. The kings had therefore to approach each region with care and individualised attention. And, of course, by so doing they further emphasised each region's individuality. The existence of this variegated political landscape had been emphasised by the varying reactions in the regions to the crisis of the Third Syrian War, and it was at the root of the succeeding events. These can best be characterized as a collapse of the kingdom into its constituent parts. It was the work of Seleukos II throughout his reign to fight that collapse; ultimately he failed, and died because of his failure, but his efforts did lay the foundation for the eventual success of his sons in the same endeavour, and their work produced a much stronger state, yet one which was still basically heterogeneous.

It bears repeating that the war which had begun in 246 was in origin a succession dispute within the Seleukid royal house. It developed into a 'normal' war once the deaths of Berenike and her son were publicly confirmed, but it then changed back to a war of succession. Seleukos II had left his family, which at this point consisted of his mother Laodike, his brother Antiochos Hierax, and his wife and young children, in Asia Minor. It no doubt became clear that, for a king on campaign in Syria, to attend to the administration of the complexity of Asia Minor was not possible. The answer was to appoint his brother as his agent, or perhaps as his co-king, which was done in 245 or 244,[8] when Seleukos began his main campaign to recover Syria, a campaign which lasted three or four years. To safeguard the position their sister Laodike was married to Mithradates of Pontos, with a dowry consisting of that part of Phrygia which was occupied by the Galatians.[9] This would keep both Mithradates and the Galatians busy with each other for the present. Antiochos Hierax was only fourteen at the time, so for the present he was little more than a figurehead, being assisted and supervised, as later appears, by his mother and by his uncle Andromachos, her brother. Seleukos was himself married to Andromachos' own daughter

[8] Justin 27.2.6 implies that the appointment was made soon after Seleukos recovered Antioch, which was in 244; Porphyry *FGrH* 260 F 32.6.

[9] Justin 38.5.3; Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.231.

Laodike (II).[10] The family of Akhaios was therefore effectively in control of Seleukid Asia Minor. In addition Andromachos' and Laodike's sister was already married to Attalos, the king in Pergamon. It may well be that Seleukos had little choice in the matter of ceding control of the region to his brother.

The approach of the end of the war with Ptolemy III provoked a change in these arrangements. Hierax, now aged sixteen or eighteen, refused to assist his brother in the war in Syria, thereby either rebelling or declaring his independence, depending on one's point of view. By this time—probably 242—Ptolemy had recovered his lost cities on the Ionian coast and had made progress in Thrace. He may well have been another who encouraged Hierax into claiming his independence. It may not be a coincidence that Seleukos and Ptolemy made peace the next year, with Seleukeia still held by Ptolemy, it is said by one source that Hierax' actions was a factor in the decision for peace.[11]

The situation was changed not only by the treaty of peace between Seleukos and Ptolemy III, but also by the death in 241 of Eumenes I at Pergamon. He was succeeded without any trouble by his cousin Attalos I, his adopted son, who was the actual son of Andromachos' sister, Antiochis.[12] This might be thought to be a reinforcement for the Akhaiid domination of Asia, but it turned out that no one was able to work with Antiochos Hierax.

Seleukos invaded Hierax' region in 240/239, a dating which is uncertain, but which also means that he had spent a year or more since making peace with Ptolemy Euergetes in, presumably, attempting to reach some accommodation with his brother, and in preparing for his attack. Both enterprises, as it turned out, were unsuccessful. Seleukos reached the heart of Hierax' domain, Lydia, and won a victory. In reply, Hierax hired a Galatian army, and made an alliance with his brother-in-law Mithradates of Pontos. There was a second battle at Ankyra, deep in Galatian territory, in which Seleukos was heavily defeated. Seleukos had to escape the defeat in disguise and withdrew back to Syria.[13] This part of the 'War of the Brothers' lasted perhaps two years (239–237), though this is only approximate.

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[10] Polybios 4.51.4 cf. Walbank 1.505.
[11] Justin 27.6–9; Trogus, *Prologue* 27; Strabo 16.2.14.
[12] Strabo 13.4.2.
[13] Polyainos, *Stratagems*, 4.9.6 and 8.61; Justin 27.2.10–11.

For some years the brothers tolerated each other's independence, but only because both were busy elsewhere. Within Asia Minor, Hierax became gradually more entangled in local politics and disputes. His Galatian mercenaries turned on him at one point, no doubt seeking greater powers and control, or, as Justin puts it, license to raid Asia again. He had to recruit another army to gain some control over the Galatians.[14] He was allied with one brother-in-law, Mithradates, but eventually quarrelled with another, Attalos I of Pergamon. He married a sister of King Prusias of Bithynia, apparently in 230, the year Prusias' father Ziaelas was killed by his own Galatians.[15] Hierax' centre of power was in Lydia and the Hellespontine region, which is the region where his coins were mainly minted.[16] He was thus part of the aristocratic network which covered Asia Minor, though unlike earlier Seleukid kings, he was not in control of the region.

In addition to this fraternal fighting, the aunt of the two brothers, Stratonike, reappeared in Syria, at Antioch. She had been married to Demetrios, the heir of Antigonos Gonatas, but was repudiated by her husband.[17] He inherited the Macedonian kingship when Antigonos died in 239, and the repudiation, while related in a personal style in the sources, must also signal a break in the political relationship between Seleukid and Antigonid kings, a break no doubt facilitated, or possibly even instigated, by the Seleukid civil war. Stratonike was angry at her treatment and came back to Asia looking to gain power or revenge, or both. She contacted both brothers, and proposed marriage to Seleukos, and possibly to Hierax as well. When refused, she attempted a *coup* in Antioch, which may or may not have been a conspiracy including, or on behalf of, Hierax. She failed, and was lynched while trying to escape from the city.[18]

Once again the dating is unclear, as is the possible connection between Hierax and Stratonike, but the essential point here is that all these conflicts within the Seleukid family were aspects of the failure of the Seleukid kingdom at the time. The kingdom was nothing but the lands ruled by the

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[14] Justin 27.2.11.

[15] Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.251.

[16] Houghton, *Seleucid Coins*, 291–293; cf. also C. Boehringer, 'Antiochos Hierax am Hellespont', in M.J. Price et al, *Essays in Honour of Robert Carson and Kenneth Jenkins*, London 1993, 37–47, showing that he minted at seven places on the Hellespont and only two elsewhere.

[17] Justin 28.1, 2–4.

[18] Agatharchides, *FGrH* 86 F 20.

Seleukid family, and by about 235, which is the least unacceptable date for Stratonike's attempted *coup*, the royal family was broken into rivalries, and partly as a consequence of that the kingdom itself had broken into several pieces. As a result, non-Seleukid rivals, internal and external, had seized or were seizing control of large parts of it, and the process continued.

Seleukos had lost territory to Ptolemy, including Seleukeia-in-Pieria, parts of Kilikia, and several cities along the Aegean coast from Karia to Thrace. His brother had taken Asia Minor away from him, and after his defeat at Ankyra in 237 Seleukos does not appear to have disputed this. Hierax' constant involvement in conflicts with other Asia Minor magnates, of course, kept him busy most of the time, though he made at least one attempt to invade Syria, where he was defeated by an army commanded by Andromachos and Akhaios, brothers-in-law of both of the Seleukids (their elder brother, Alexandros, was governor of Sardis, and perhaps of Lydia, for Hierax).[19]

Seleukos even faced trouble in Babylon. The evidence is in the Astronomical Diaries, where two notices, dated 238 and 235, record trouble among the soldiers stationed at the palace in the city. The second of these is stated plainly to be caused by men who 'had revolted against the King Seleukos'.[20] It is not known if these incidents are connected with each other (though that is surely likely) or with the troubles with Hierax and Stratonike, or perhaps even with the Baktrian secession. Whether connections existed is not for the present purposes all that important. The main point to note is that it is all evidence for the breakdown of the state. And this collapse came about as a direct result of the defeat of the king in the war with Ptolemy. With trouble in Babylonia and Asia Minor, secession in the east, and one of the main cities of his patrimony in enemy occupation on his very doorstep, Seleukos and his supporters would surely need time for recuperation.

All of this was no doubt regarded with much satisfaction by Ptolemy III. The kingdom he and his family had fought three times in thirty years was clearly crumbling to extinction. How far, or even if, he assisted the process of disintegration in the 230s is a problem. He had certainly helped it along by taking back to Egypt all the elephants he could catch, and probably all the ships he could find as well. This selectively damaged

19 Polyainos, *Stratagems*, 4.17; cf. R.A. Billows, *Kings and Colonists, Aspects of Macedonian Imperialism*, Leiden 1995, 98–99.

20 Sachs and Hunger, −237, −234.

Seleukos rather more than Antiochos. Even so Seleukos was clearly the stronger of the two, so Ptolemy no doubt favoured Antiochos. He actively assisted him in putting down a rising by a group of his Galatian mercenaries in Magnesia,[21] and later he took the part of Attalos I. It is possible that he was nibbling away at the borders of the Seleukid possessions in Karia and Thrace, just as had Antiochos II ten years before.[22] He could also take some satisfaction from the death of Antigonos Gonatas in 239 and the subsequent rupture of the Seleukid-Antigonid connection. On the whole, however, just like every other Ptolemaic and Seleukid king, he was constrained by his peace treaty with Seleukos II, though perhaps the greatest restraint on Ptolemaic adventuring was the obvious strain which existed within Ptolemy's own kingdom, plus the natural relaxation of the victor in the previous war. Self-satisfaction was no doubt rife in Alexandria.

After 230 conflict revived. It may well have begun in Baktria. The succession of Diodotos II, and his assumption of the royal title, was complete by the mid-230s, though the exact dates are impossible to locate. Like Antiochos Hierax's defiance, this was a direct challenge to Seleukos. By 230 he had largely recovered his authority in the lands from Syria to Iran, and for several years he and Hierax had been at peace. In Baktria, however, Diodotos faced a challenge from his own internal opponent Euthydemos. The fighting between them ended about 225, according to a recent study of the problem, and it was probably the key to the expedition of Seleukos II to the east in about 228.[23]

The assumption is that Seleukos' policy was to reunite his broken kingdom. This seems reasonable; it was the policy pursued by his sons for two decades after his death, and it is an obvious one for a king to pursue. A civil war in a secedent province was an ideal situation in which he could intervene in the hope of succeeding in recovering his lost lands—it was, after all, what Ptolemy III had done in Syria, with remarkable success. Seleukos was, however, in a trap. If he marched east, Hierax might well take advantage of his absence—after all, Hierax also claimed to be the legitimate Seleukid king. Seleukos' son, Antiochos III, seems to have learned the lesson: faced with a similar situation, he deliberately ignored the east in favour of suppressing rebellion in Asia Minor. But Seleukos

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21 Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 32.8.

22 The dates of his recovery or acquisition of some of the smaller towns on the Hellespont are not known; they could well be in the 230s.

23 Holt, *Thundering Zeus* 54–56, 62–64.

may well have taken advantage of Hierax's own troubles, for it was in 228 that Attalos I of Pergamon quarrelled with Hierax and they fell to blows. The exact sequence of all these events is not known, but if Hierax became fully occupied in his war in Asia Minor, Seleukos could have felt the time opportune to march east.

He faced, and dealt with, some trouble in Babylon on his way, but then moved on into Iran from there, which suggests that the trouble was minor. The notice in the Astronomical Diaries indicated that he had his sons with him.[24] His first task in Iran was to defeat the Parthians, and in this he apparently failed. But the real problem was that there was more trouble in Syria in his rear; a single defeat by the Parthians, if it actually occurred,[25] was hardly decisive; but an invasion of Syria by Hierax threatened his very existence.

Hierax was defeated by Attalos, and was driven right out of western Asia Minor, just as Seleukos had been.[26] Hierax's subsequent invasion of Syria was just about his last gasp, though he did have a substantial force with him. He was met by a Seleukid army commanded by Akhaios and Andromachos, who pushed him north into the Armenian mountains.[27] He escaped, but the crisis was bad enough to bring Seleukos back from his Parthian war.[28] For one of the results of Hierax's defeat by Attalos was the conquest of all Seleukid Asia Minor by the Pergamene king. Hierax escaped his various enemies to reach Thrace, but there he was arrested by Ptolemaic forces, after apparently asking them for help. When it was obvious none was forthcoming, he escaped from his jail, but was soon afterwards killed by Galatians or by bandits (who may well be the same thing).[29]

This cleared the air in Asia Minor, and Seleukos could wage war on Attalos with a reasonably clear conscience—the brothers had always retained an affection for each other. No doubt Seleukos had simply reversed his earlier priorities: now it was Asia Minor first, and Baktria later. It is also noticeable that he made no attempt to return to the attack on Ptolemy. If the peace of 241 had really been for ten years only, he could have restarted the war in 231, though it is more likely that he was bound by the oath of peace until he or Ptolemy III died. But his priority was

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[24] Sachs and Hunger, –229.
[25] Justin 41.4.9.
[26] Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.253; Justin 27.3.6.
[27] Polyainos, *Stratagems* 4.17.
[28] Justin 41.4.10.
[29] Justin 27.4.7–11; Trogus, *Prologue* 27.

always the restoration of his kingdom and his royal authority. Now that Asia Minor had fallen to Attalos he could justify an invasion as being against a foreign usurper. He did not underestimate the task, and spent more than a year in preparation, for Attalos' expulsion of Hierax had been in 228, and only in 226 was Seleukos ready to cross the Taurus (Hierax having died in 227). But at that point Seleukos was killed in a riding accident.[30]

He was succeeded by his eldest son Alexander, who took the throne name Seleukos (III).[31] The new king cannot have been more than eighteen on his accession, and he behaved with adolescent energy and misdirection during his short reign. And yet he stuck to his father's priorities. He reverted to the former Seleukid practice of dispatching his heir, his younger brother Antiochos, to govern the eastern regions while he concentrated on the west. Antiochos went to Babylonia, which clearly needed some royal attention after recent events.[32] Seleukos' priority, like his father's, was now Asia Minor. This disposition might have been seen as less a reversion to old practices and more likely to be yet another division of the kingdom, had the brothers behaved as their father and uncle had done, but Antiochos was loyal to the king. (It is possible to interpret the history of the Seleukid Kingdom as a multiple monarchy, with one king in the west and one in the east, and where rule by a single king was the exception.)

Seleukos sent his uncle Andromachos against Attalos. He was one of queen mother Laodike's brothers, and so was also related to the other Asia Minor dynasts, in Pontos and Pergamon, and he had large estates in western Asia Minor—and he was related to Attalos as well. It has been assumed that he was given command of the first attempt to fight Attalos, precisely because he might be able to call on support from other kings and lords. But his first attempt to fight Attalos failed, and he ended up as a prisoner of Ptolemy III in Alexandria, presumably handed over by Attalos as a price for Ptolemaic support, or as an attempt to involve Ptolemy in the fighting.[33] For it must have been clear that in a war of any length, Attalos would lose. King Seleukos himself then conducted a campaign into Asia Minor, in alliance with a commander called Lysias, who was presumably one of the dynasty of the Lysiads domiciled in Asia

[30] Justin 27.3.12.
[31] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 32.9.
[32] Polybios 2.71.4; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 46; Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.40.12.
[33] Polybios 4.48.7.

Minor.[34] That is, with both Andromachos and Lysias and their influence on his side, Seleukos had considerable support from within Attalos' conquered territories, something which his father presumably had not had. Seleukos was also unsuccessful in his own war, but in this case it was because he was assassinated by two of his own officers, Nikanor and the Galatian Apatourios.[35]

Seleukos comes across as impetuous, and gained the nickname Keraunos, 'Thunderbolt', though it seems that his own chosen surname was Soter, 'saviour', which is perhaps an indication of his political intentions. His allies and his death indicate clearly enough the continuing political disorder in the kingdom, and yet he had made a serious attempt to prepare the ground for his reconquest diplomatically. Of course, the disorder had been quietly helped along by Ptolemy, who, as already noted, had given assistance to Hierax when some of his Galatian mercenaries mutinied—though Ptolemy could reasonably claim that this was a public service, given who the mutineers were—and later, by detaining Hierax when he fled to Thrace, he had materially assisted Attalos to resist the Seleukid attacks, and then he had received and detained Andromachos. But Ptolemy was not directly involving himself; as can be expected, he did no more than assist the pot to keep boiling on the assumption that this was the best way to weaken the Seleukid state; it was the same sort of action, mainly indirect and diplomatic, which both kingdoms had perpetrated in earlier periods of peace.

Ptolemy was also concerned, as ever, at the actions of the Macedonian kings. Demetrios II died in 229 and his successor Antigonos III Doson (229–221) intruded his power into Karia in 227, just at the time Hierax died, and just before Seleukos II was due to make a new attack. Karia, of course, was a sensitive area on the borderlands of Ptolemaic and Seleukid and Rhodian power, and where a Seleukid governor, Olympichos, had been in office for a long time. Now Antigonos and Olympichos struck up an alliance.[36] Olympichos had detached himself into effective independence during the Seleukid civil wars, being separated from the king by hostile rulers, just as was the first Diodotos in Baktria. Many of the coastal Karian cities were under Ptolemy's control, if distantly; the region was close to Rhodes, which ruled a *peraia*, a part of the mainland, opposite

[34] *OGIS* 277 = Austin 231; Allen, *Attalid Kingdom*, 35–36.

[35] App. *Syr*., 66; Polybios 4.48.8; Trogus, *Prologue* 27.

[36] Such is the assumption because he was later attested in such a relationship with Philip V: Crampa, *Labraunda* III, nos. 4–7.

the main island, and had ambitions to extend its little empire further.[37] Karia was also an area where Attalos and Hierax had fought one of their battles. The arrival of a direct Macedonian interest in the area was therefore bound to make things even more complicated.

With the death of Seleukos III in 223, the Seleukid dynasty was reduced to the life of one adolescent, Antiochos III, and his accession triggered new attempts to seize parts of the failing kingdom. Antiochos' youth ensured that he was at first wholly in the hands his advisers.[38] Four of these men are identified: Akhaios, son of Andromachos (Seleukos III's Asia Minor ally, at the time a prisoner in Egypt), of the cadet branch of the royal family; Molon, and his brother Alexander; Hermeias, who had been Seleukos III's main adviser, and was possibly the driver of the diplomatic preparations for the reconquest of Asia Minor; and Epigenes, a military man. Of these Akhaios and Hermeias were the most important, and seem to have been able to take major decisions with only the most perfunctory reference to the new king. They identified Asia Minor under Attalid rule as being the most pressing problem, following on the policy of Seleukos III and his father. In the spring of 222 Akhaios led an army over the Taurus to challenge Attalos' new power. Molon was appointed to the position the new king had held before Seleukos' defeat, viceroy of the east. Technically his post was satrap of Media, but his brother Alexander took on the same office in Persis, and a third brother, Neolaus, was with them. Hermeias remained with the king as the central power in the kingdom.[39] The king was in danger of being sidelined altogether, but these men appear, and at least at first, to have been aiming to hold the kingdom together; yet their methods looked very conspiratorial and nepotistic. They were also jealous and suspicious of each other.

Akhaios crossed the Taurus in 222 and was quickly successful in driving Attalos back into Pergamon and recovering control of much of Asia Minor. He had major advantages, being a major landholder in Asia Minor himself, though no doubt Attalos had confiscated his lands by now. If so this will have warned others in the same position, such as Lysias, who had taken the side of Seleukos III. The speed of Akhaios' conquest does imply that he could count on much local support, and he

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[37] P.M. Fraser and G.E. Bean, *The Rhodian Peraea and Islands*, Oxford 1954.

[38] We now, at last, have access to a reasonably competent and continuous, if opinionated, source in Polybios; his work is fragmentary, and he is particularly intent on explaining Roman power to his Greek audience, but his work is detailed and well researched.

[39] Polybios 5.40.6–41.2; this is, of course, also a valuable view of the likely conditions within other Hellenistic courts.

penned Attalos up in Pergamon.[40] This happened despite Attalos having acquird help in some form from Magas, one of the sons of Ptolemy III, who had presumably been despatched by his father to oversee Ptolemaic interests in the Aegean.[41]

The situation was thus a great improvement on the successive failures of Seleukos II and Seleukos III and Andromachos. Yet there were disturbing elements. Akhaios had been with Seleukos III when he was murdered, and the soldiers of the royal army had then offered to make him king. He had refused, and stated his loyalty to Antiochos,[42] who at that time was far off in Babylon. Yet the offer had been made, and it implied an apprehension among the soldiers, most of whom were citizens and landowners in Syria, since that is where Seleukos had begun his march. Others were from Asia Minor, and had seen the mess made in that region by the Seleukid kings in the last two decades. And Attalos I had clearly had some local support in his rule of the conquered territories.

Once a man is offered a crown and refuses it, the thought must recur that the refusal had been a mistake. Akhaios, whether given viceregal powers on not, certainly acted as an independent ruler in the recovered territories. In addition to these pressures, he was a relative of Attalos by marriage, and in many ways a colleague. Both were great lords in Asia Minor, and now that Antiochos Hierax was out of the way, they would have had no difficulty in agreeing. Attalos may have been penned up in Pergamon late in 222, but within the next year the two men had made a settlement, by which Attalos recovered the kingdom he had held before his war with Hierax. Whether this treaty was referred to King Antiochos for his ratification is not known; indeed, the existence of the agreement is only postulated on the basis of later events. Whether or not the king was consulted, it was clearly one more item in the list of independent actions taken by Akhaios after his successful reconquest.[43]

This came later. For a time Antiochos and Hermeias could look with some pleasure on the first six months of the former's kingship, but in the next year or so it all went wrong, and this was due to the king's advisers themselves. The independence of Akhaios may have been disturbing, but at least he had proclaimed his loyalty to the king and had conquered

40 Polybios 4.48.11.

41 W. Huss, 'Eine ptolemäische expedition nach Kleinasien', *Ancient History* 8, 1977, 187–193.

42 Polybios 4.48.1–3 and 5–12.

43 Allen, *Attalid Kingdom*, 26–27.

in his name. In the east, however, Molon used his new post to make himself king, an action which was scarcely sudden or spontaneous; it had presumably been his intention from the time he had been appointed. Furthermore he gained support in his own and his brother's satrapies, and was able to raise a 'large' army from their territories, an army which was capable later of facing the royal forces with a good chance of success. In effect he controlled all the kingdom from the borders of Parthia to the Zagros Mountains.[44]

The blame for what was going wrong in Antiochos' kingdom in these years is laid by Polybios firmly on Hermeias, who is accused of malpractice and oppression.[45] He had been in power for some years, first under Seleukos III, and, whatever his personal failings, he had certainly been responsible for appointing, or agreeing to the appointments of, Akhaios to Asia Minor and Molon to the east; it is also the case that he faced serious opposition within the King's Council, above all from the soldier Epigenes. This would seem to be a man therefore with only an uncertain grip on power, and the sending of Akhaios and Molon to distant parts was no doubt a measure designed to rid himself of other court enemies. But he does seem to have dominated Antiochos at the start, and continued to do so.

Antiochos' direct rule was now reduced to northern Syria with Kilikia, Babylonia, and the connecting province of Mesopotamia. It must be assumed that neither the king nor Hermeias expected Molon to move out of Iran. Even so it has long seemed curious that Hermeias should have recommended an attack on Ptolemaic territory, which he now did. The clue to this policy shift must be that the news had arrived that Ptolemy Euergetes was seriously ill—he died early in 221, some months later. This circumstance would suggest a weakening of the government in Egypt during Ptolemy's illness, and some confusion if the king died. In the face of the obvious retort, that Molon should be dealt with first, Hermeias persuaded Antiochos, against the advice of Epigenes, to send an army against him under the command of two capable generals, Xenon and Theodotos Hemiolios, and reserve himself for fighting in Syria. Clearly the revolt in the east was not seen as too serious, and the opportunity afforded by possible Ptolemaic difficulties was regarded as unmissable.[46]

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[44] Polybios 5.41.1.
[45] Polybios 5.41.2–4.
[46] Polybios 5.42.4–5.

It may also have been assumed that a war against the hereditary enemy might persuade Akhaios and Molon to give support and thus help to reunite the kingdom.

One part of Hermeias' policy was notably successful. In 221 the king was married to Laodike, the daughter of King Mithradates II of Pontos, in a ceremony at Seleukeia-Zeugma on the Euphrates. The girl had been escorted from her home by the Seleukid admiral, Diognetos, but the negotiations, and the suggested marriage, will have been by Hermeias in the first place. Laodike was in fact the sister of the wife of Akhaios (she was also called Laodike) and it may well have seemed a clever move which would tie Akhaios more closely to Antiochos. It was also, of course, yet another strand in the complicated web of marriage relationships criss-crossing Asia Minor.[47]

The Seleukid forces were gathered at the city of Apameia in Syria. It is unlikely that this gave any warning to the Ptolemaic government, since Apameia was the normal war headquarters of the Seleukid forces, and Molon's rebellion gave a good cover for the Syrian mobilisation. In the event, however, it seems likely that Ptolemaic defensive preparations were initiated just in case. The Seleukid preparations, following on the preceding discussions in the King's Council, and then the despatch of Xenon and Theodotos to the east, clearly took some time—the marriage would not necessarily interrupt the work in Apameia, except for the necessary celebrations. Then, before any move against Ptolemy could be made, news arrived that Molon had overawed the army under Xenon and Theodotos Hemiolios and had moved out of Iran to take control of Babylonia. The generals had discovered that they were outnumbered and had put their soldiers into the cities as the best defence in the circumstances. Molon besieged Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, the greatest of the cities, but was unable to cross the river because the governor there, Zeuxis, had collected up all the river boats.[48]

This defeat required a further expedition to the east to stop the rebel, and so the attack on the Ptolemaic lands was delayed. It was in this hiatus that the news arrived of the death of Ptolemy III, which had occurred about the end of 222 or early in 221. (His son, Ptolemy IV, succeeded, but faced considerable problems from the start of his reign.[49])

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[47] Polybios 5.43.1–4.

[48] Polybios 5.43.6–8, 45.3–4; cf. Walbank 1.571–574.

[49] Polybios 2.71.3; like Antiochos, Ptolemy IV was young (about 20), and under the

A new Seleukid army was dispatched eastwards, commanded this time by Xenoetas of Akhaia, another mercenary general.[50] At the same time, Antiochos himself took the royal army south along the Orontes River into the Bekaa valley, thereby initiating the Fourth Syrian War.[51] He moved fairly slowly, clearing the land of Ptolemaic posts and garrisons, until he reached the fortified lines in the valley of the upper Litani, between Gerrha and Brochoi. The Ptolemaic forces, well warned of Antiochos' approach by this time, resisted with competence and success, under the command of an Aitolian mercenary general, Theodotos. Every attack Antiochos made on the lines was stopped.[52]

General Xenoetas was even less successful than the king. He believed that Molon's army was fundamentally loyal to Antiochos and was liable to desert the usurper if given the chance. He got across the Tigris and captured Molon's camp, but his forces, overconfident, drank themselves into a stupor on Molon's wine. Molon returned and his men were happy enough to gain an easy victory over an army which scarcely provided a shining example for them to follow. In the aftermath Seleukeia also fell to Molon. He now turned south to remove the loyal governors of southern Babylonia and Susiana.[53] By the time the news of this reached Antiochos, Molon was in control of well over half of his kingdom.

Molon, after the victory and the capture of the royal city, had himself proclaimed king, as is shown by the coins he issued.[54] It was always necessary for a usurper to fight a successful battle—better, a war—before such a proclamation. Kingship, after all, involved making war above all other activities, and success as a rebel indicated that one was of kingly material. (This, of course, was one of the engines which drove the Syrian Wars, for it was necessary for a king who took office by hereditary right to demonstrate his fitness by winning in war soon after his accession.)

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influence of a strong minister, Sosibios; unlike Antiochos he accepted the situation, and Sosibios continued in office.

50 Polybios 5.45.6.

51 I have included this initial anti-Ptolemaic campaign in this chapter, though technically it should have been put in the next; the real break in the Seleukid history, however, comes with the suppression of Molon's rebellion, and the real beginning of the Fourth War came with the siege of Seleukeia. It is significant that Polybios, in his account of events at Alexandria, ignores this preliminary Seleukid attack. Its failure puts it in the period of Seleukid collapse, which ended with the deaths of Molon and Hermeias.

52 Polybios 5.45.8–46.4; cf. Walbank 1.576–578.

53 Polybios 5.46.6–48.16.

54 E.T. Newell, *The Coinage of the Eastern Seleucid Mints*, New York 1938, 85–86 and 204–205.

Molon's proclamation, however, was the beginning of his downfall, since now it was both right and necessary that Antiochos himself go to the east to deal with the menace.

So Antiochos, despite failing in the Bekaa, insisted against Hermeias that he should himself now lead the campaign against Molon. This dispute between the king and his first minister developed into a complex court crisis, and the army quartered at Apameia, unpaid and defeated in the Bekaa, mutinied. It was unpaid because the treasury was empty, and Hermeias came up with the cash from his own resources. His price for this service was the forced retirement of Epigenes, but even then one contingent, the Kyrrhestae (a regiment based at Kyrrhos in north Syria), continued to defy the king. They had to be forcibly suppressed, a task which took a considerable time. Hermeias procured Epigenes' death and went east along with the king.[55]

The complex of plots and sedition and rebellions which marked Antiochos' first years[56] is largely a carryover from the troubles of the previous decades, a distant result of the succession dispute in 246 and the War of the Brothers which had clearly left a legacy of disputatiousness and disobedience in the official circles in the kingdom. It has been suggested that the real problem in the first years of Antiochos was that Hermeias was attempting to increase the powers of the central government as against the provincial governors, who had been able to operate with much more independence as a result of the crises in the royal family.[57] But Hermeias was not the king, though he was certainly attempting to wield the king's powers. By the time of Molon's second victory his influence on the king was clearly weakening, and he reacted by surrounding Antiochos with guards and engulfing him in court etiquette. Antiochos was not yet confident of his own powers, and felt threatened by his guards, who were more loyal to Hermeias than to him. Now Hermeias went with the king and the army against Molon, despite his self-proclaimed ignorance of military matters.

Hermeias' argument, as related by Polybios, was that it was the task of the king to fight kings, and generals should be sent to fight rebels.[58]

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[55] Polybios 5.49.1–50.14.

[56] Extended investigations by E. Will, 'Les premiers années du règne d'Antiochos III', *REG* 75, 1962, 72–129, and H.H. Schmitt, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Antiochos' des Grossen und seiner Zeit*, Historia Enszelschriften 6, Wiesbaden 1964, 116–150; Will replied in *Revue Philologique* 40, 1968, 283–287.

[57] Will (previous note), summarised in his *Hist. Pol.*, 2, 17–18.

[58] Polybios 5.45.6.

This clearly had a certain resonance with Antiochos, who had an exalted conception of his position. This worked until the generals sent against Molon successively failed, and he himself was defeated in the Bekaa by an army commanded by a general. Molon, of course, had proclaimed himself king, and issued coins in his own name,[59] so when Antiochos himself went against him he could argue he was doing as Hermeias recommended—fighting a king. But another argument, not apparently employed on this occasion, worked even more strongly with Antiochos.

All through his reign, at least until the last half-decade, it is best to see Antiochos as working to restore the kingdom he inherited to the boundaries it had originally had; this was the work he inherited from his father and his brother, and which Hermeias was, to be sure, ostensibly pursuing. This meant going back to the reign of Seleukos I. One of these areas was Koile Syria, of which Seleukos I had been unjustly deprived by the first Ptolemy. Whether or not that was what had happened is immaterial: it is what Antiochos believed had happened. It was clearly the principal motive behind his later expeditions to the east and into Asia Minor, and for his operations in Thrace, where both Seleukos I and Antiochos II (and Antiochos Hierax) had operated. But the key to all this was Koile Syria. And here the argument of *realpolitik* entered. Koile Syria was the fist of Ptolemaic power, within a couple of days' march of some of Antiochos' Syrian cities—as Antiochos had found out the hard way—and it was the presence of this power which had allowed all those separated provinces to get away. It was the necessary concentration of Seleukid military power in north Syria to counter the continuing threat from Koile Syria which pinned down large numbers of Seleukid soldiers who could more advantageously have been used elsewhere. The recovery of Asia Minor by Akhaios had been hindered by Ptolemaic interference, but once control of Asia Minor was completed attention could return to Koile Syria; and now Molon's usurpation was another distraction. When Hermeias urged the king to make war on Ptolemy IV, he did not have to exert his persuasive powers very much; it was a task Antiochos had already seen he had to undertake. And with new kings in both the Seleukid and Ptolemaic dynasties, a new war between them had become all too likely, even without Seleukos III's inner drive. The Ptolemaic defences in the Bekaa had clearly been alert and expecting an attack. Confusion was known to exist in the court at Alexandria, but a similar

[59] Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 85–86, 204–205.

confusion in Antiochos' court had not prevented him launching a war on Ptolemy; the reverse might well happen to him if he did not strike first.

Antiochos probably did not need to consider his motives, but his war aims were different from those of his ancestors. None of them had yet made a real attempt to conquer the disputed province. Two at least had invaded it, and Seleukos II had apparently reached Damascus, but the capture of that city would only be a single step on the way to the conquest of the whole area. The Phoenician cities would need to be taken, and those in Palestine as far south as Gaza, before a halt could be called. By attacking in the Bekaa, Antiochos seems to have made the first serious Seleukid attempt; by being defeated, he was forced to rethink his approach.

The new Ptolemaic king, Ptolemy IV, called Philopator, had different aims, primarily defensive, in the Ptolemaic policy tradition. There is no sign that he was unwilling to fight the war, and by interfering in Asia Minor he revealed that his overall policy was to continue disrupting Antiochos' kingdom by supporting and encouraging dissidents and rebels.[60] In actual fact, the capability and participation of Ptolemy IV in all this is somewhat doubtful. He was about twenty years old when he inherited the throne, some years younger than Antiochos, but with perhaps even less experience of ruling. His first minister was Sosibios, a very able and experienced man, the victor in several games, and a long-time counsellor to Ptolemy Euergetes, and it seems that Philopator thankfully left much of the work to him.[61]

Securing the king's position was the first priority after Philopator's accession. He was quickly married to his younger sister Arsinoe III (she must have been only a child), and Sosibios systematically killed off the other male members of the royal family: Lysimachos, the surviving brother of Ptolemy III, Magas, Ptolemy IV's own brother, who had already been used as an agent in Asia Minor, and had a strong following amongst the soldiers, including a regiment of mercenaries 3000 strong, and seems to have been his mother's favourite.[62] Magas quite rightly was seen as a threat, but having his mother's support meant that she had to be killed as well.[63] Sosibios also eliminated the refugee king

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[60] Ptolemy IV has received an even worse press from Polybios than Hermeias, but if we strip out Polybios' obvious bias, the foreign policy he pursued seems quite competent and traditional: cf W. Huss, *Untersuchungen sur Aussenpolitik Ptolemaios' IV*, Munich 1976.

[61] *Pros. Ptol.*, 478, 5272, 17239; Huss, *Aussenpolitik*, 242–251.

[62] Polybios 5.34.1 and 36.1; 15.25.1–2; Plutarch, *Kleomenes* 33.3.

[63] Polybios 5.36.1.

Kleomenes III of Sparta, a dangerous man to have around, for he was both capable and a revolutionary.[64] Sosibios ensured that Ptolemy was kept amused, amongst other things by a mistress, Agathokleia, whose mother and brother constituted part of the ruling group.[65]

It is this melange which so disgusted Polybios, and yet it appears to have had its basis in the preferred worship of Dionysos, part of which consisted of wild and extravagant celebrations. This practice had developed during the reign of Ptolemy III and involved a deliberate display of magnificence—the notion of *tryphe*—with which to dazzle the rest of the world, and to suggest the favour of the gods, and, of course, the king's competence and victoriousness.[66] After the successes in the Third Syrian War, Ptolemy III had good reason for this attitude, and he even used the title Tryphon as part of it.[67] But Ptolemy IV only inherited this practice, and had not earned it by any achievement, at least in his first years, and the enlargement of the Dionysiac element in the display made it all look less like a political and religious celebration than an expensive orgy.

The measures taken against his family members ensured that the king's position in Alexandria and Egypt was secured. They took place in the year or so after his accession, that is, in 221–220. One result, however—and this must have occurred to all involved—was that the available males of the royal house were reduced to a single one, the king himself. (This had also been the case in the Seleukid kingdom after the death of Seleukos III.) Both Ptolemy IV and Antiochos III were therefore quickly married, but Ptolemy IV's bride, his sister Arsinoe (III) appears to have been only a child at the time, and they only had one child, who was not born until 210. Antiochos III, however, was married to a more distant relative, and he and Laodike produced at least seven children in their marriage. The Seleukid dynasty was therefore secured, at least by the production of available males; the Ptolemaic dynasty was reduced to one male between 220 and about 190, except between 210 and 205, when Ptolemy IV and his son were both alive.[68]

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64 Plutarch, *Kleomenes* 36–37; Polybios 5.36.1–39.6; Kleomenes had assisted Sosibios in his earlier plots.

65 Polybius 14.11–12.

66 Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 133; H. Heinen, 'Die Tryphe des Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes II. Beobachtungen zu ptolemäischen Herrscherideal und zu einer romischen Gesandtschaft in Egypten in 140/139 v. Chr.', in *Althistorische Studien FS H. Bengtson*, *Historia* Einzelschriften 40, Wiesbaden 1983, 116–127.

67 Trogus, *Prologue* 28 uses this title for him.

68 For list and names cf. Ogden, *Polygamy*, 81–82.

The two kings were therefore each facing an internal court crisis at more or less the same time, but in Antiochos' case the main manifestation was an attempt to usurp or dismantle his kingdom, whereas in Egypt the conflict was confined to the court. Antiochos succeeded in suppressing Molon without much difficulty. Molon's army turned out to be loyal to the king after all, and only needed the king's presence to show it. Molon, his brothers, his wife and his children all died or were killed.[69] As in Alexandria, no pretenders or threats would be permitted, not even the existence of a person with a family connection to one. Molon's troops were rebuked, pardoned, and returned to their Iranian homes. Hermeias punished Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris by a large fine and the exile of the magistrates, so that Antiochos had the opportunity to demonstrate his forgiveness,[70] neatly undermining Hermeias at the same time. Antiochos then went on, presumably using the former rebel soldiers, to conduct a brief campaign into Atropatene, whose King, Artabarzanes, rapidly submitted.[71]

The result of all this was a blow to Hermeias, who had opposed the expedition, for his whole policy now seemed to have been aimed at causing the king to fail; suspicions must also have existed that he and Molon, and perhaps Akhaios, had been allies, and that their main and joint intention had been to divide the kingdom between them, although Hermeias had produced a letter (said by Polybios to have been forged) suggesting connections between Ptolemy and Akhaios.[72] Antiochos' two successes, against Molon and against Artabarzanes, relatively slight though they were, clearly boosted his confidence, but he still lived in a court in which Hermeias controlled the personnel, and the guards were Hermeias' men. The only man Antiochos felt he could trust was his doctor, Apollophanes, and between them they arranged the assassination of Hermeias.[73]

Meanwhile, the first child of Antiochos and Laodike was born soon after the suppression of Molon. (The existence of the child was said, by Polybios, to have been one of the reasons Hermeias agreed to the Atropatene campaign, since, if the king was killed, an heir existed whom he could both control and dominate; this is an interpretation all Polybios' own, though it was certainly Antiochos' practice to fight in the front of

[69] Polybios 5.51.1–54.7.
[70] Polybios 5.54.10–11.
[71] Polybios 5.55.1–3, 7–10.
[72] Polybios 5.42.7.
[73] Polybios 5.56.1–12.

his battles, and the thought may well have crossed Hermeias' mind.) The dynasty was now safer than before, though this was also one of the factors behind the next problem.

In 220, after Antiochos had dealt with Molon and Hermeias, Akhaios took the royal title. The timing seems perverse, but he will have appreciated that the removal of Molon and Hermeias was also an obvious threat to him. He was the only one of the original quartet who had taken power after the death of Seleukos III who was still alive, and the alliance with Pontos which was signalled by the king's marriage, was a move by Antiochos into the Asia Minor network, of which Akhaios had been until then the centre. He may have felt that he had little choice and that making himself king would gather local loyalty to him.

Akhaios' political move in fact backfired. He successfully negotiated his proclamation as king, at Laodikeia-ad-Lykon, but then marched his army eastwards. Eventually the soldiers, by this time the full levy of the Seleukid province of Lydia and the nearby territories, realized that Akhaios was aiming to fight Antiochos, who was still beset in Syria by the continuing revolt of the Kyrrhestae. Akhaios' troops stopped in Lykaonia, and made it clear that they would support him as king in Asia Minor, but not in a fight with the rest of the Seleukid kingdom.[74] Akhaios had no choice but to accept this, and turned his army on to a campaign against the nearby Pisidians.

The reaction of the army is interesting in that it implies that the separation of Asia Minor from the Seleukid kingdom was an idea popular with the people of that land. It was, after all, twenty years and more since the last legitimate Seleukid king had ruled them, and since then they had been in effect an independent state. Their kings—Antiochos Hierax, Attalos I, now Akhaios—were all part of the same extended family, and it would be quite reasonable to see them all as representatives of an Akhaiid dynasty. But the significance of the troops' strike is wider, for once Antiochos III realized what had happened, he understood that his political and strategic options were suddenly much wider and clearer than before. He could choose his moment for eliminating Akhaios, whereas Akhaios was unable to attack him.

Akhaios and his kingdom were safe enough while Ptolemy still held Koile Syria. Antiochos and Ptolemy were already at war, as a result of Antiochos' invasion in 221, and if Antiochos invaded Asia Minor, he

[74] Polybios 5.57.5–7.

would almost certainly himself be menaced by a Ptolemaic army from the south. Hermeias' letter, forged or not, was only one item of evidence that Ptolemy III or IV supported Akhaios; Ptolemy III had certainly assisted the Hierax and Attalos, and there was no reason to suppose Ptolemaic policy had changed. So for the moment Akhaios could be ignored; Ptolemy was the target for Antiochos; Hermeias' policy was thus implemented by his king and killer. The way was now clear, all distractions removed, for the Fourth Syrian War to get under way.

## CHAPTER NINE

# THE FOURTH WAR

The Fourth Syrian War is the first of the series for which we possess an ancient account, by Polybios, which goes into detail on the actual military campaigns, so for the first time a reasonable estimate may be made of the competing strategies in a war. The drawback, of course, is that it is the only source, and that any competing accounts have disappeared. (We will see the advantage of such a competition in the discussion of the Fifth War's campaign.) On the whole, of course, the advantages outweigh the drawbacks, but the latter need to be kept in mind.

Despite his experience with Hermeias, Antiochos, perhaps all too aware of his own inexperience, and perhaps shaken by the need to murder his main adviser, continued to rely on his council for advice. Unfortunately only two members are named, Apollophanes, the king's doctor, who had organized the *coup* against Hermeias, and Diognetos the admiral, who had been the escort of Laodike to her marriage. There were undoubtedly other men there as well, who made 'many suggestions' as to the way to proceed.[1]

This council is described by Polybios as discussing how to proceed with the war. The meeting took place at Apameia, probably in the late winter of 220/219. Though Polybios does not mention it, one preliminary decision must have been to ignore the secession by Akhaios, which had taken place earlier in 220. Antiochos is said to have reproached Akhaios for his action,[2] but he clearly had no intention of attacking him while Ptolemaic power lay so close to his Syrian cities—and, of course, the refusal of Akhaios' soldiers to invade Syria meant that Akhaios was no threat.

In the meeting Apollophanes, after an inconclusive discussion, recommended first retaking Seleukeia, which was his home city.[3] In truth there were only two possible approaches, now that it was clear that an

[1] Polybios 5.58.2–3; so far as we can see, it remained Antiochos' practice to consult his council all through his reign.

[2] Polybios 5.57.1–2.

[3] Polybios 5.58.3–10.

immediate attack on Akhaios was excluded:[4] either a siege of Seleukeia or a repetition of the earlier campaign into the Bekaa valley. The council was held at the army's mustering place at Apameia, so another Bekaa campaign was clearly at first the likely option. Apollophanes pointed out that the enemy's hold on Seleukeia was very restricting to all other enterprises, and at that whatever was attempted, and the first measure required a guard to be placed on Seleukeia; taking the city would both eliminate this drain on Seleukid resources and provide a useful base for the other actions. Apollophanes perhaps did not need to mention that he was an exile from the city and that its recovery would allow him to go home. Even discounting this element, his strategic argument was convincing. How necessary it was that he should make the point, or even if it really was him, is not clear. The situation was surely all-too familiar to the council, and it may be that Polybios was merely putting words into Apollophanes' mouth in order to make the situation clear for his readers.

In addition to the discussion in the council, there was the experience of invading Koile Syria by way of the Bekaa valley which Antiochos had the year before. If Seleukeia was a major military problem, to tackle both the city and the Bekaa fortifications at the same time was clearly too much. Antiochos' army was clearly somewhat weakened. Apart from the casualties in the fighting against Molon in the east, and the inaccessibility of the manpower of Asia Minor, there was the loss of the Kyrrhestae, whose mutiny / rebellion had only ended when the troops were destroyed. It was therefore necessary to make rather better preparations than before, when Antiochos insouciantly had invaded the Bekaa Valley at Hermeias' urging. Apart from the obvious military preparations, recruiting troops, embodying units, training them, significant diplomatic moves were made. Contacts were made with corruptible soldiers and officials in both Seleukeia and, with a view to later activity, in the province of Koile Syria as well. The governor of Seleukeia could not be reached, being unfortunately uncorruptible, but some of his aides were more easy-going; in Koile Syria no less an official than the governor-general Theodotos was subverted.[5]

The approach this time was to be systematic rather than a blunt assault on the Ptolemaic fortifications without a proper reconnaissance: first, a guard was set to prevent any interference from Koile Syria. Theodotos Hemiolios (still employed after his defeat by Molon) took a detached

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[4] Polybios 5.58.1.
[5] Polybios 5.60.9 and 61.3.

force to occupy 'the narrow passage'.[6] This was presumably somewhere in the northern Bekaa, an area which was not fortified by the Ptolemies, and was only thinly populated. This disposition was designed to prevent any Ptolemaic force coming north, or at least to provide plenty of warning if it did; no doubt a considerable distance was left between the forces of the two Theodotoi. Seleukeia was blockaded from the sea by the small Seleukid fleet under Diognetos to stave off any naval interference. Antiochos brought his main army to camp on the low ground by the coast south of the city 'at the hippodrome'. The city was well fortified in the modern manner of the time, with strong walls and, presumably, a garrison considered adequate to meet an attack, but the walls enclosed a huge area, which included the harbour and the acropolis, high above the main part of the city. Such places had the reputation of being difficult to capture: they either gave in at once or stood a long siege. The most effective way to take them was by internal subversion. Antiochos used all methods. He overcame the strength of the city by simultaneous assaults at four different places, together with the preliminary subversion of key officers. It all worked like clockwork. Speed was essential, since a long-drawn-out siege would allow the superior Ptolemaic fleet to come north to relieve the attack. The city fell after a fairly brief assault.[7]

This siege is rarely if ever mentioned in discussions of either ancient warfare or ancient sieges.[8] The latter tend to be involved particularly with investigating the types of siege engines in use, with not much about the actual conduct of sieges; the former skip rapidly from Classical Greece to Rome, omitting the Hellenistic period. But the Hellenistic sieges were of much interest, and this one at Seleukeia is particularly worth considering. For a siege is not necessarily violent, except in threats. The most effective means of capturing a city was clearly to subvert its garrison. The capture of Seleukeia was a model of its kind—and so the weapons used were not just catapults and rams and *testudos*, but money and persuasiveness. Antiochos had clearly learned quickly, perhaps from the experience of the court dispute over the treatment of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, where Hermeias' vindictiveness had been replaced by the royal forgiveness. In

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[6] Polybios 5.59.2.

[7] Polybios 5.59.1; 60,2–10.

[8] P.B. Kent, *Ancient Siege Warfare*, Bloomington IN, 1999; E.W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery*, 2 vols, Oxford 1969; K. Nossov, *Ancient and Medieval Siege Weapons*, Staplehurst, Kent, 2006. H. Delbruck, *Warfare in Antiquity*, trans. W.J. Renfroe, Lincoln, NB 197, ignores siege warfare.

a world in which fortified cities were the most common features of the landscape it should be obvious that sieges are vital elements in warfare.

There was no attempt, so far as we know, by any Ptolemaic commander to interfere with the siege. Of course, it was over quickly, thanks to Antiochos' intelligent planning, but Leontios, the Ptolemaic city governor, could have been helped from Cyprus. The Seleukid fleet was small, perhaps no more than twenty or thirty warships, and could have been at least challenged by the Ptolemaic forces in Cyprus or Palestine (there were forty Ptolemaic ships at Ptolemaic-Ake).

The Ptolemaic inactivity fits with the lack of reaction to Antiochos' attack in the previous year. When Antiochos invaded the Bekaa valley in 221, the Ptolemaic forces stood on the defensive. This, to be sure, was successful, but the complete failure to take any advantage of Antiochos' defeat, or of his internal political difficulties, suggests that either the Ptolemaic government was paralyzed, or that it was active elsewhere. The previous year it had certainly been active in assisting Attalos I against Akhaios by sending the Ptolemaic prince Magas to Asia Minor with a small force; and Hermeias was able to produce a letter which he claimed showed contact in 221 between Akhaios and Ptolemy.[9] These two items suggest that Ptolemaic policy was busy in supporting anyone opposed to Antiochos.

During 220, however, Molon was eliminated, and Akhaios was prevented by his troops from leaving Asia Minor. These two items therefore brought Ptolemaic policy to nought, and Antiochos was left free to conduct a free-for-all discussion in council, where all options were aired; he now had the luxury of a political choice while the Ptolemaic government had to work out a new policy. By 220 Ptolemy IV's government was stabilized with the removal of possible usurpers, though Kleomenes was still seen as a nuisance, and yet no measures of defence were taken. This cannot have been through ignorance or laziness; the king's minister, Sosibios, was highly experienced and most unlikely to fail to perceive the threat posed by Antiochos. The assessment in Alexandria must have been that Antiochos would turn to deal with Akhaios, and that Seleukeia and Palestine were safe. The refusal of Akhaios' troops to march against Antiochos therefore overthrew all assumptions: with Akhaios confined to Asia Minor Antiochos could now attack in Syria without fear of either rebellion or interference.

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[9] Polybios 5.42.7–8; Polybios says that Hermeias forged the letter; so he may have done, but contact existed nevertheless; cf. Walbank 1.573.

The basic mistake of the Ptolemaic government was therefore internal, in that the army generals commanding in Koile Syria, Theodotos and Panaitolos, both Aitolians, were so alienated as to be open to Seleukid subversion. Theodotos was Ptolemy's governor of Koile Syria and had foiled Antiochos' original attack in 221 at the Gerrha-Brochoi lines. Since then he found that his position at the Ptolemaic court had been severely undermined. That court was as riddled with intrigue and faction as Antiochos' had been when Hermeias controlled it; Sosibios was inevitably suspicious of any military commander with a victory to his name and soldiers under his command who were primarily loyal to him—this was what brought Kleomenes of Sparta to his death at this time, and Magas also in a way. Theodotos had seen the fate of Epigenes at Hermeias' hands, and saw that of Kleomenes; he had also seen the reaction of Antiochos to Hermeias' domineering ways, and that no similar reaction to Sosibios was likely at Alexandria. He was clearly vulnerable; unlike Epigenes and Kleomenes, he was not prepared to await his fate, and being distant from the events at Alexandria, he had time and room for manoeuvre. Polybios states that he contacted Antiochos, offering to change allegiance; this may well have been the public version.[10] The procedure at Seleukeia rather suggests that Theodotos knew in advance that his offer would be accepted.

Theodotos did not wait for an answer to his letter, presumably understanding that he had to show that he was serious before Antiochos could afford to respond. After all, he had been the commander in the Bekaa who had defeated Antiochos and was still in Ptolemaic employ; it was obviously up to him to take the initiative. He seized control of Ptolemais-Ake, the major governing city in Palestine, and sent his subordinate Panaitolos, to seize Tyre. These actions suggest that he had been preparing the ground for some time, for he was clearly able to count on the garrison at Ptolemais, and Panaitolos on that at Tyre. The letter to Antiochos will have been sent, therefore, not long before he moved,[11] but he probably waited until he heard the outcome of the siege of Seleukeia. He needed help from Antiochos very quickly if his *coup* was to succeed.

Antiochos naturally hesitated until the news of Theodotos' actions arrived, which was some time after the letter. Between Tyre and Ptolemais and Antiochos at Seleukeia was a long route studded with Ptolemaic

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[10] Polybios 5.61.3–5.

[11] Polybios 5.61.5.

cities and fortresses which Theodotos did not control, including the lines of Gerrha-Brochoi. It was, however, the best chance the king had of breaking through the Ptolemaic fortifications and into those lands he claimed, and to take advantage of it he had to move quickly. The threat to the Ptolemaic position in Koile Syria was so serious that a swift reaction from Alexandria, and perhaps from other commanders in Syria, could be expected.

Antiochos took his army south, into the Bekaa valley as before.[12] The main army reached the lines at Gerrha and Brochoi, which Theodotos did not control, and which Antiochos apparently did no more than menace. He left the hoplites—the heavy infantry—with instructions to mount a siege of Brochoi, and took the light infantry to climb over the mountains to the coast, no doubt by way of the modern route between Baalbek and Beirut. He had thereby also bypassed the fortified towns of the north Lebanese coast. Nikolaos, the Ptolemaic commander sent to suppress Theodotos, had laid siege to Ptolemais, and presumably to Tyre (though this is not mentioned). When he learned, no doubt by messages from Gerrha and Brochoi, of Antiochos' move, he left a force to continue the siege,[13] and occupied a strong position near Berytos, where the coast road was confined by the sea to the west and the mountain slopes to the east.[14]

Nikolaos, however, was necessarily preoccupied with the two sieges, and did not have many forces to spare. He sent a force commanded by Lagoras of Crete and yet another Aitolian, Dorymenes, to hold the pass south of Berytos, but Antiochos was able to drive them out without difficulty. Holding the pass, he now brought over his main force, abandoning the siege at Brochoi and Gerrha.[15] When his army was fully present he marched south; Nikolaos, now overmatched and no doubt unwilling to be crushed between two forces, withdrew. Antiochos took over Ptolemais and Tyre and accepted Theodotos and Panaitolos as his men. He also gained control of the Ptolemaic ships in the harbour of Ptolemais-Ake,

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12 Polybios 5.61.6–7.

13 Polybios 5.61.6, says that Antiochos put off his planned expedition against Akhaios to go south instead, but this does not fit with the general situation: he was already at war with Ptolemy, and if he took his forces into Asia Minor he would leave the Seleukis exposed. He was in no danger from Akhaios, but Ptolemy was a clear threat; hence he had no immediate plans to invade Asia Minor.

14 Polybios 5.61.7–9.

15 Polybios 5.61.10–62.1.

forty warships. It was a major addition to his own navy.[16] But Nikolaos, by withdrawing, was able to consolidate the Ptolemaic forces in Palestine into a considerable army.

Polybios now remarks that Antiochos 'abandoned his project of attacking Pelusion', because Ptolemy was making active preparations there.[17] Such a comment flies in the face of both the strategic situation and common sense. Pelusion was hundreds of kilometres away. And between Ptolemais and Pelusion there were many fortified towns and cities garrisoned by Ptolemaic troops; also Nikolaos' army, which had been defeated, but was largely intact. That is, this is another of Polybios' assumptions based, probably, on Ptolemaic propaganda. The defensive preparations at Pelusion were sensible, and were probably the first stage in mounting a relief expedition into Palestine—Polybios notes that drinking water, necessary for the crossing of the Sinai Desert, was being collected—but the story being put about inside Egypt no doubt was that Ptolemy was busy defending Egypt itself. But Egypt was under no threat of immediate attack from Antiochos III, and none was intended. His aim was always to 'recover' Koile Syria.

The presence and activity of Nikolaos and his army in Palestine indicated clearly enough that the Ptolemaic government was making major preparations to resist Antiochos' attack. This was the third year of the war—Antiochos' first invasion was in 221—and yet the Ptolemaic forces were still not ready. The government was, of course, in some disarray, having had to concentrate on gaining full control in Alexandria and Egypt first, and had staved off one invasion, and presumably had expected Seleukeia to hold out longer than it did. Some hopes had presumably also been placed in the deterrent effect of Akhaios' rebellion, and, of course, the treason of Theodotos and Panaitolos had been completely unexpected. But now Antiochos' invasion, and the final elimination of trouble internally, allowed minds in Alexandria to be concentrated.

Antiochos had broken through into Palestine and had gained an increase in his seaward strength, partly by capturing the ships at Ptolemais, but also by seizing three major harbour cities—Seleukeia, Tyre, and Ptolemais. Egyptian forces were concentrated at Pelusion, the frontier

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16 Polybios 5.62.2; rather surprisingly there is no mention of ships captured at Tyre; perhaps the local Ptolemaic naval force had been consolidated to attempt the relief of Seleukeia, perhaps Polybios ignored the Tyrian ships.

17 Polybios 5.62.4–5.

fortress which blocked the route from the Sinai desert into Egypt proper; sluices on the rivers and canals were opened to flood the land; wells were blocked up.[18] Ptolemy had been at Memphis when he heard of Antiochos' breakthrough; now he toured local towns to boost morale and enlist support—he was at Bakousa in December 219.[19] Nikolaos' army was still at large in Palestine, and Antiochos' aim was to 'recover' Koile Syria. So that is what he set about doing. Nikolaos had ensured that the main cities of Palestine were held by strong and loyal forces. Antiochos besieged Dor, south of Ptolemais on the coast, but it was well garrisoned, and Nikolaos' field army was still largely intact and able to assist the defence, though we are not told how. Antiochos' army was pinned down by the siege.[20]

Winter approached. The Ptolemaic government proposed a truce, aiming to gain time to continue their preparations. Antiochos accepted,[21] with the object of consolidating the position he had gained, rest his army, and get back to Seleukeia to deal with any problems which had arisen since the city's capture. It was clearly going to take a much greater effort than Antiochos had so far made, and a much larger army than he had with him, to continue the war in Palestine and Phoenicia. Like Ptolemy, he had to recruit his forces, consider his options, and develop his strength. There was still work to be done in his own kingdom, and Akhaios had to be watched.

The situation was therefore awkward for both sides, and both required time. Ptolemy was known to be urging Akhaios on; Antiochos' conquests were precarious and unfinished; Ptolemy's preparations were taking a long time. Akhaios was trapped between his ambition and his understanding that Antiochos would certainly come against him sooner or later, and the unwillingness of his new subjects to fuel that ambition. It was this last factor which was once more decisive.

Negotiations for peace over the winter were conducted without hope or sincerity on either side. It gave Antiochos the opportunity to state his case for the 'return' of his 'lost' provinces—he went right back to the aftermath of Issos, and for Ptolemy to refute these arguments. Neither king was interested in a settlement while Antiochos held only part of

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[18] SB XII, 10867; W. Clarysse, 'The Ptolemies visiting the Egyptian *chora*', in L. Mooren (ed.), *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*, Studia Hellenistica 36, Louvain 2000, 29–53.

[19] Polybios 5.66.1.

[20] Polybios 5.63.4–6 and 66.2–4.

[21] Polybios 5.67.3–68.1.

Palestine: both thought they could get the whole.[22] The ostensible point at which agreement was impossible was the suggestion by Ptolemy's envoys that Akhaios be included in the treaty; since it was obvious that this was wholly out of the question for Antiochos, and the envoys knew it, this proved a good excuse to end the talks; in fact, there was never any hope of them succeeding. Polybios claims that it was all to gain time for the Ptolemaic preparations, which is correct enough, but the talks only lasted through the winter of 219–218, when fighting would have been suspended anyway.

Antiochos meanwhile also dealt with the problem of Arados. Sometime in the early 220s his father had reversed the concessions he had made to the city in 242, while under pressure in the Third Syrian War. The evidence for this is, once again, mainly numismatic, in that three of the towns in the Aradian *peraia*, Gabala, Balanaia, and Marathos, began minting coins in the 220s. This could only have been done by permission of the king, and only after he had taken control of the *peraia* out of Arados' hands. Arados, however, was hardly to be satisfied by this reversal, which left the island-city autonomous but without its little empire.

In 218 coining by these small cities ceased. Again this was clearly a royal action, not something which was achieved by Arados, which had been unable to stop Seleukos II depriving it of the *peraia*, and was clearly similarly unable to take action against Antiochos III. The king's much more powerful position seems to be the clue to this next change. He had now taken over Seleukeia-in-Pieria, held Ptolemais and Tyre, and he had acquired a considerable fleet. He now had no need to rely on Arados for naval support, which had been essential when the only Syrian harbour he controlled was at Laodikeia; and to leave Arados angry in his rear was dangerous, especially since a Ptolemaic fleet was stationed in Cyprus, fairly close to Arados across the water. A timely generosity, returning the *peraia* to Arados' control, would appease Arados, and would bring the city's fleet on his side without reservations about its loyalty. The dating of all this is only approximate, given the problems of numismatic chronology, but the reference to his dealings with Arados early in 218 fits the political and strategic situation very well.[23]

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[22] Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*; J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados et sa Perée*, Paris 1974; H. Seyrig, 'Arados et sa Perée sous les rois Séleucides', *Syria* 23, 1951, 206–220.

[23] E.g., Polybios 5.62.7.

Polybios claims that the object of Ptolemaic diplomacy was to gain time to prepare for Antiochos' further attacks, implying that the cunning of Sosibios and Agathokles was taking advantage of Antiochos' youth. This is one of the many details which suggest that Polybios was using a source or sources based on the Ptolemaic account of events. He several times remarks that Antiochos' attack was not justified,[24] that he had broken treaty agreements—but he does not detail what treaties he is referring to, a vague accusation typical of political propaganda. In fact, of course, no treaty can have been agreed between Antiochos and Ptolemy IV, since they had been at war since before the latter became king. And, from Antiochos' point of view, he had plenty of justification in the intrigues of Ptolemy and his father in Asia Minor.

It was obvious that Antiochos would continue his attacks after the winter break. His campaign in 219 had been improvised, and the next campaign would be in much greater strength. The failure to take Dor, and the known preparations in Egypt meant that he needed to make more detailed and extensive plans. The truce for four months, that is, for the winter, was convenient for both sides. Antiochos' dealings with Arados were one of the results.

The negotiations did clear the air concerning the rival war aims, and allowed both sides to publicize their cases. Mediators from Rhodes, Kyzikos, Byzantion, and Aitolia—a group of Greek states often aligned politically with Ptolemy—were the intermediaries, and so all were being enlightened, particularly as to Antiochos' side of the argument, as he went right back to the defeat of Antigonos Monophthamos eighty years before in explaining what his aims were. Ptolemy, on the other hand, claimed the right of continual possession—even without the issue of the Ptolemaic protection of Akhaios, the two would never agree.

The object of Ptolemaic strategy was therefore to delay Antiochos' new attack as long as possible while preparing their defences. Antiochos, having made it clear in the abortive winter negotiations that his primary aim was to gain possession of all Koile Syria and Palestine, had to physically possess himself of every town and city. He could not afford to agree to anything less, for to negotiate a partial conquest would mean his argument from deprivation of his rights would be nullified. Because Antiochos had to make a complete conquest, Ptolemy would eventually have to face him with his full augmented army.

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[24] Polybios 5.63.8–9.

This was the first time since Seleukos I that the Seleukid claim had been fully articulated, but it was also the first time any Seleukid king had been in a position to attempt to make the claim good. Seleukid kings had invaded Koile Syria before Antiochos, but, so far as we can see at this distance, only in tactical terms, by way of putting pressure on their Ptolemaic opponents in the context of the fighting in a war. But Antiochos III had grown up at a court where the restoration of the monarchy's authority had been the overriding concern. The Ptolemaic occupation of Koile Syria was one of the items in that list, but as he gradually succeeded in putting down rebellions its importance loomed larger. If Polybios' account of the king's speech to the peace delegates is anywhere near correct, it shows that Antiochos had researched the history of the past century, and in so doing he had clearly reached the conclusion that removing Ptolemaic power from his Syrian doorstep had become essential. On top of that there was Apollophanes' argument in council concerning Seleukeia, and before that Hermeias' report on the relations of Ptolemy and Akhaios, which was now confirmed at the peace conference.

To this new concentration on Koile Syria may be added Antiochos' evident ability to take the long view. Perhaps this may be contrasted with the impetuousness of his brother, which had given him the nickname 'Keraunos'. From a personal and family point of view it must have galled Antiochos particularly that Akhaios was permitted for the present to continue as king in Asia Minor, but he was able to leave him to one side and focus on the main issue, which was that defeating Ptolemy would also ensure the later defeat of Akhaios, whereas the reverse was not true. The bases for this political viewpoint were partly his education and experience up to this point, but one must also credit Hermeias with a considerable educational achievement in political and strategic matters before he died.

In Egypt Sosibios was busy recruiting Ptolemy's forces. Polybios is quite clear that it was the minister who did the detailed work, not the king, whose task was to gather support. The basic levy of Greek cleruchs in Egypt was to be reinforced by a vigorous enlistment of mercenaries from Greece, Anatolia, and anywhere else troops were available, and by bringing to Egypt many of the mercenaries already in Ptolemy's service in the empire. The outbreak of war in the western Mediterranean in 218 (the 'Second Punic War') further reduced the possible market, and this was soon linked with the 'Social War' in Greece which had been on for the previous two years. In such a situation mercenaries could choose

their war; no doubt their price went up. Most serious from the Ptolemaic point of view, the number of available soldiers was not limitless, and it seems clear that the government was unable to gather anywhere near the number of men it felt it needed.[25]

The two rival armies were by now well known to each other. It is evident that the Ptolemaic forces, in a battle between the full forces on each side, would be outnumbered. Polybios lists the forces available when they eventually met in battle at Raphia:[26] the Egyptian phalanx was 25,000 strong—that is, the Greco-Macedonians settled in Egypt—and others from Egypt and Libya numbered 3700 cavalry and 9000 infantry, partly Royal Guard and partly cleruchs. The mercenaries numbered 13,000 infantry, including 3000 Cretans and 2000 Thracians and Galatians; the rest were simply 'mercenaries', presumably small groups from several diverse sources. This is a total of a little over 50,000 men, a quarter of them mercenaries, the rest cleruchs.[27] In the decisive battle Antiochos had almost 65,000 men.

Polybios claims that this recruitment of mercenaries was kept secret by the device of bringing the envoys, those from the Greek cities and those from Antiochos, to Memphis rather than Alexandria, where the military preparations were being made.[28] This must be nonsense. Recruiting mercenaries was not a secret process, but was done in public in many different cities in Greece. It will have become known to Antiochos as soon as recruitment began. One could also claim that Antiochos, by holding the meetings with envoys at Seleukeia-in-Pieria rather than Antioch or Apameia, was doing the same, and concealing his own preparations which were going on in the interior, principally no doubt at Apameia. Polybios hints at this by claiming that Antiochos 'dismissed his forces to their winter quarters and henceforward neglected to exercise his troops',[29] an assumption wholly unlikely, but one which might well result from ignorance of Antiochos' actual measures, which included recruitment of his own mercenary force and calling up contingents from his whole kingdom. (Antiochos was holding the meetings in Seleukeia, of course, to demonstrate his possession of the city, making the point emphatically

[25] Polybios 5.65.1–10; cf. Walbank 1.589–592 and B. Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army*, Cambridge 1976, 117–125.
[26] Polybios 5.65.8–9.
[27] Polybios 5.63.6–7.
[28] Polybios 5.66.5.
[29] Polybios 5.79.3–13.

that its return to Ptolemaic rule was not something to discuss; and it seems that this was tacitly accepted by Ptolemy's envoys, since the city never figured in the discussions.)

Antiochos had originally operated with a relatively restricted force. The Seleukid kingdom could raise, in an emergency, a big army, but the usual campaigning force in Antiochos' time was an army of about 30,000 to 35,000 men. The control of Media provided access to a major supply of horses and cavalry, and there was a standing army composed of those young men doing their military service, plus the professional troops who had enlisted for full, long-term service. Most enemies could be overawed or defeated with little difficulty by such a force, with the exception of that of the Ptolemies. It is probably an army of this size that Antiochos used in 219 at Seleukeia and in Palestine. In an emergency, however, the Seleukid king could call on a considerable reserve force, the equivalent of the Egyptian cleruchs. A year later at the battle of Raphia these forces increased his army to over 40,000 men; he had also recruited 11,000 mercenaries, and brought to the battle a contingent of 10,000 Arabs, fighting presumably as subject-allies.[30]

In the competition for mercenaries, therefore, the two kingdoms came out more or less level, 13,000 for Ptolemy and 11,000 for Antiochos. This means that Polybios' account of the recruitment process is seriously misleading. He emphasizes the Ptolemaic hiring of mercenaries, but it is clear that Antiochos was also hiring at the same time. Both kings had corps of elephants, with Antiochos having a rather larger number than Ptolemy; his beasts were Indian rather than African, and were therefore more useful, since the Indians were easier to train. (Antiochos' elephant corps had been rebuilt since 245, when Ptolemy III took the earlier animals as booty.) The Arab contingent of 10,000 troops with Antiochos would have made the difference in numbers without further action by Ptolemy, and this was no doubt known in Alexandria. All the cleruchs had been called up, and there were no more mercenaries available. There was only one other available source of manpower. A century earlier, Ptolemy I had recruited a contingent of Egyptians to fight at Gaza, but no other Ptolemy had done so since; now his great-grandson resorted to the same source. But whereas Ptolemy I had recruited about 8000 for his 'native-Egyptian' phalanx, Ptolemy IV had to recruit 20,000 to be sure of having a preponderance of numbers.[31] These men, by

[30] Polybios 5.65.9.
[31] Polybios 5.68.8–11.

definition, were untrained, whereas the Greeks, Thracians, mercenaries, Libyans, and so on, were already habituated to arms. The training they underwent was therefore to organise them in controllable units. Apart from recruiting these troops, it was the Ptolemaic need to train these Egyptians in phalanx fighting which explains the need for continued delaying tactics in Palestine.

With the expiry of the winter truce in the spring of 218, Antiochos brought his army south, this time along the coast road. He still held Tyre and Ptolemais, but not the places between the Eleutheros boundary and Tyre. As in the Bekaa, the main Ptolemaic defence was located well south of the boundary, between Berytos and Sidon, so that the northern part of Phoenicia was in effect abandoned to the enemy. The main defence position was at Porphyrion, probably at Ras Nebi Younes, a little south of Berytos, where the route along the coast narrows to only about fifty metres between the sea and a steep mountain spur. A second position was prepared at Platanos, probably Cap Sakhne, five kilometres further south; then there was the well-fortified city of Sidon. It was only because he had broken the continuous line of fortified cities by holding Tyre that Antiochos could use this route.

The position at Porphyrion was commanded by Nikolaos the Aitolian. His rearward base and main supply dump was at Gaza. He had the cooperation of the admiral Perigenes, who commanded a fleet of thirty warships and 400 transports. We do not know the Ptolemaic plan, but it seems to have been essentially defensive. The large number of transport ships seems too many for simply keeping the troops in the field supplied. They suggest that it was first intended to stop Antiochos at either the Porphyrion position, or, if he advanced along the Bekaa, at the Gerrha-Brochoi lines. He could then be attacked from the sea and presumably driven out of Koile Syria. The harbour at Berytos would do very well as a landing place in his rear, or there were the Phoenician cities of Byblos and Tripolis further north. None of these is mentioned in the campaign, though three other towns in the region are, two being burnt by Antiochos' forces, and one, along with Berytos presumably, occupied.

Antiochos marched along the coast road, the fleet under Diognetos pacing the army, but the heavy infantry was left behind for the moment. Once again the light forces were being used, presumably because they were more useful in mountainous country. The hoplites and the cavalry were presumably left at various places—Tripolis, Botrys and Berytos for example—to guard against the possibility of a landing such as the

Ptolemaic forces were capable of. Some of the heavy infantry at least were in camp several kilometres north of the Ptolemaic fortified position at Porphyrion.[32]

The Ptolemaic defence line had three elements: the shore route, blocked no doubt by heavy infantry, the end of the spur overlooking that position, and a third post higher up the mountainside. These three positions were intended to be interlocking and mutually supporting; the fleet came north as well, with the intention of blocking any attempt at a landing south of the main position. In fact the position was by no means as strong as it seemed. The higher detachments were too far from the others to have any effect, and prove to be easily containable by a small Seleukid force. The key was control of the spur, since, if that fell, the troops on the coast could be attacked from two sides, or even three if the road behind them was cut, or even four if the ships gave way. With an elegant gesture, Antiochos gave the key role, the capture of the spur, to Theodotos the Aitolian, who was thus put on his mettle to prove himself. This he did. His force took the spur, then turned towards the road. The Ptolemaic force there, under Nikolaos himself, which had presumably been holding its own against what seemed at first to be the main Seleukid attack, broke before much fighting had taken place: the threat of attack from both front and rear was enough.[33]

The defeat was so serious—2000 men killed and 2000 captured, the rest demoralized—that the reserve position at Platanos was easily swept away. But Sidon held out, behind its solid walls. It was well supplied as well as well-fortified, and the admiral Perigenes brought the Ptolemaic fleet into the harbour. There was thus no point in besieging the place since it could be easily supplied, but if it was left in Ptolemaic hands, along with the Gerrha-Brochoi position and Damascus, Antiochos' communications could be cut. His fleet was not strong enough to face that of Perigenes, who could be reinforced from either Egypt or Cyprus, or both. That is, despite the defeat at Porphyrion, it seemed that the Ptolemaic plan of defence was working. There seemed to be no way through for Antiochos to reach the cities he held south of Sidon.[34]

Antiochos refused to besiege Sidon. He passed the city by and broke into Palestine once more. (Of course, Nikolaos had also passed Tyre on the same road to reach the Porphyrion position.) In Palestine Antiochos

32 Polybios 5.69.1–9 for this fight; also Bar-Kochva, *Seleucid Army*, ch. 9.
33 Polybios 5.69.10–70.1.
34 Polybios 5.70.3–5.

already held Ptolemais, but nothing else. His first priority was now to ensure his logistic base, for the Ptolemaic fleet in Sidon might intercept any supply ships coming south. He turned his forces to the east, and captured the cities of Philotera and Skythopolis south of the Sea of Galilee, in the wide and productive Vale of Jezreel.[35] From there and from Galilee to the north he could collect plenty of supplies. (It was also no doubt of some satisfaction that Philotera was a Ptolemaic foundation, like Ptolemais—the war was, he might be saying, against the king personally.)

He turned back to take the conical hill of Mount Tabor, which Polybios called Atabyrion, so clearing his communications between the Jordan Valley and his base at Ptolemais.[36] (This rushing ahead to seize an advanced base and then clearing his passage behind him is something Antiochos did in other wars.) From Skythopolis he crossed the Jordan and campaigned along the King's Highway which ran south along the uplands, capturing Pella and nearby towns.[37] These and other cities were places from which Ptolemy would be able to gather soldiers; they were therefore important targets for Antiochos. He was accomplishing several purposes: he eliminated the threat to his rear when he moved into southern Palestine; he showed he was intent on conquering the region systematically; and he had put a widening strip of conquered territory between Nikolaos' army in the south and the Ptolemaic posts across his rearward communications from Sidon to Damascus. Instead of these cutting him off he had isolated them. He may have had another aim in view: to bring the Ptolemaic army out of Egypt to defend these lands; if so, he failed.

Victory had other rewards. A Ptolemaic officer, Keraias, now joined Antiochos, was well rewarded (as Theodotos had been) and this encouraged others, including a Thessalian, Hippolochos, who brought over a whole regiment of cavalry with him.[38] After Pella, Antiochos widened the region beyond Jordan by taking Gadara and Abila. This gave him control of a solid block of territory stretching from Ptolemais right across to the Jordan Valley and the edge of the desert, and the local Arab tribes were sufficiently impressed to supply submissions and food.[39] A Ptolemaic force was being gathered at Philadelphia (Amman), presumably from local garrisons, and was menacing the Arabs who had recently joined

[35] Polybios 5.70.6–9.

[36] Polybios 5.70.12; there is no real sign that Polybios understands the geography of Antiochos' campaign; he is basically only listing the captures in sequence.

[37] Polybios 5.70.10–11.

[38] Polybios 5.71.1–3.

[39] Polybios 5.71.4–10.

him. A swift march and a rapid assault ensured the city's capture, and no doubt convinced the Arabs that they had joined the winning side.[40] In effect Antiochos had now conquered much of the trans-Jordanian Ptolemaic territory.

It was now nearly winter, a whole campaigning season having been occupied in conquering the Phoenician coast and part of Palestine. The two Ptolemaic deserters, Keraias and Hippolochos, were given a force of 5000 men and posted into the Samaria district. This widened the area of Antiochos' control—he had ignored that region so far, and it also showed that he trusted and rewarded those who came over. Again he put these men on their mettle, as he had Theodotos. To be on the safe side, however, Antiochos wintered at Ptolemais.[41]

Antiochos had conquered a considerable strip of territory, but from the Ptolemaic point of view another year had been gained for preparation. The Ptolemaic reaction to the invasions of Koile Syria indicated quite clearly that it was still regarded essentially as a defence for Egypt. In the north, half of the Bekaa valley had in effect be left undefended; the same logic had been applied on the coast, and everything north of Porphyrion had been abandoned to the enemy's destruction and occupation, with only a minimal attempt at defence. Even the defence of the coast road at Porphyrion had been so easily overthrown that it seems certain that the forces committed to it were inadequate. In northern Palestine only Dor had been seriously defended in 219, and then only at the end of the fighting season. In the trans-Jordanian campaign delay had been the only object: nothing had been defended for very long, and only minor forces had been needed. It would seem that the inhabitants understood this: most of the places Antiochos captured made little resistance, if any. Atabyrion and Philadelphia were defended, but in neither case for more than a couple of days. Presumably garrisons had been withdrawn, and the citizens did not have the power to resist. In the circumstances it is not surprising that competent officers, who were clearly not being supported adequately, were disillusioned enough to change sides.

Polybios goes immediately from Antiochos heading for winter quarters to the preliminaries of the Raphia campaign. He says nothing about the events of the next spring, except for dating the march of Ptolemy's army to Pelusion 'at the beginning of spring', which is presumably

40 Polybios 5.71.11–12.
41 Polybios 5.79.1.

March.[42] The Ptolemaic army remained there for three months: a decree produced after the campaign by an assembly of Egyptian priests dates the march from Pelusion to mid-June.[43] So the army was ready to march at the end of the winter but was held in camp for three months, a delay Polybios ignores.

The first we know of Antiochos' army is also in June, when it was at Gaza.[44] Since he had wintered at Ptolemais in northern Palestine, he had therefore marched and campaigned through southern Palestine during the previous three months, while the Egyptian army waited at Pelusion, assuming that both campaigns began in March. It seems clear from Polybios' references to Gaza, both before and after the battle, that Antiochos had captured the city,[45] but what other places he had taken is not known. Since he had left Sidon, Damascus, and the Gerrha-Brochoi position all untaken in his rear, it is likely enough that he had done the same with at least some of the other towns in southern Palestine; he had failed to take Dor in 219 and this may well be one city he had ignored. There is no sign of any campaign into the Judaean hills, so probably Jerusalem was also ignored.

But by reaching Gaza, and holding it, as we may assume he did, Antiochos had effectively make good much of his claim to 'recover' his 'lost' lands. If, once Gaza was in Antiochos' hands, Ptolemy and his army did nothing, it would only be a matter of time before the places in Palestine and Phoenicia which were so far untaken fell to Antiochos' pressure. We may imagine that for some time (say, a month) the two armies camped at Gaza and Pelusion waited to see who moved first, but Antiochos' general success compelled the Ptolemaic army to respond; Ptolemy's army moved first.

Once it was clear that this movement had begun, Antiochos moved out from the Gaza camp. He advanced to the town of Raphia, a little over thirty kilometres from Gaza, and camped a short distance ('ten stades', says Polybios) beyond the town. Polybios implies that he was responding to Ptolemy's army's advance, which is correct enough, but the Seleukid army needed only a day's march to reach its new camp, while the Ptolemaic army had a much longer journey to make: 180 kilometres from

[42] Raphia decree = Austin 276.

[43] Polybios 5.80.4.

[44] Polybios 5.80.4 (Antiochos rested his army at Gaza); 5.86.4 (Antiochos camped at Gaza on his retreat).

[45] Polybios 5.80.1–4.

Pelusion to the camp west of Raphia. This was a notoriously difficult march, which had destroyed large armies before. Ptolemy's army made it in only five days, which implies considerable advanced logistic preparation, including the pre-positioning of supplies, particularly of water. This is one of the matters which had been attended to during the three-month pause. But the speed of the march is a sign of the danger the army was in by crossing the desert.[46]

This is also another factor, which seems to account for Antiochos' choice of camp. Raphia is the last place on the journey from Gaza to Egypt where water and grass is available in any quantity. (When the British forces reached the area in 1917 after marching and fighting along the same route as the Ptolemaic forces, many of the Europeans exclaimed in rapture at seeing greenery once more.) By occupying Raphia and then camping a little way to the west Antiochos was denying the Ptolemaic army access to the water at Raphia and compelling an early decision by Ptolemy on whether to fight or retreat.

The timing of all this—the two armies arrived west of Raphia on the same day—implies that Antiochos had information about the movement of his enemy's forces. This could be from his own men sent to spy, or from the local Arabs, or perhaps from ships watching the coast. It is also obvious that he had information about Ptolemaic recruitment of mercenaries, and about the condition of Ptolemy's army. But his information about the size and constitution of that army may well have been out to date. Sosibios' practice of interviewing envoys at Memphis denied them information about military preparations in Alexandria. Since the recruitment of mercenaries could not have been kept secret this presumably meant that it was the recruitment and drilling and training of the Egyptian phalanx which was being concealed—and Sosibios himself took command of this unit. The recruitment of that phalanx meant that Ptolemy's army outnumbered Antiochos' by over ten per cent when they met in the battle, and even more so in the decisive element of numbers of heavy infantry. This could have rebounded, if the army had been kept much longer in the desert, for the larger the army the greater its logistic needs; in the event it was the decisive advantage.

At first the two armies were camped half a kilometre apart, but Antiochos moved much closer 'after a few days'.[47] One reason would seem to be that Ptolemy's forces had located supplies of water and forage, and

[46] Polybios 5.80.5–6.
[47] Polybios 5.80.7–81.7.

by moving further west the Seleukid troops could try to prevent them exploiting these new supplies. They were now close enough so that the watering and foraging parties repeatedly skirmished with each other. The two forces were also close enough for men to pass across from one to another, and Theodotos the Aitolian made a serious attempt to assassinate Ptolemy, which failed.[48] It will have been clear to Antiochos about this time that Ptolemy had a bigger force than he had expected, which might explain the Theodotos' rather desperate exploit. The disparity in force meant that now it was in Ptolemy's interest to fight and Antiochos' to delay. So it was Ptolemy's army which began the process of deploying for battle, though Antiochos was alert enough to follow suit at once, perhaps in the hope that his rapid response would deter an attack.[49]

The two armies adopted the normal formation of the time: the infantry phalanxes in the centre, with light infantry and then cavalry on each wing; elephants were lined up in front of the lights and horse on both sides (partly to keep them away from their own phalanxes if they were stampeded). The only subtlety in the deployment was that Antiochos concentrated most of his cavalry on one flank, his right, probably with the aim of directly attacking Ptolemy personally. The closeness of the two forces now made it impossible for them to return to their camps, since the first to break formation would make itself vulnerable to attack by the other. The two kings paraded before their armies, uttering promises and encouragement. Ptolemy had brought along his sister-wife Arsinoe, still only a child, the better to inspire devotion, presumably. This parading was a curious custom, made all the more surreal by the previous night's clandestine attempt to assassination. But both kings were allowed to complete their progresses, and only then was the order to begin the fight given.

The Ptolemaic elephants were beaten by the better trained and more numerous Seleukid beasts; this put the Ptolemaic forces behind the elephants in danger. The elephants had been concentrated on either wing precisely because of this problem, since if they retreated onto the phalanxes all would be lost. Instead they were removed from the field, but this disorganised Ptolemy's left wing in the process. Antiochos, in personal command of his cavalry on the right wing, charged to drive

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[48] Polybios 5.82.1–85.13 is the account of the battle; modern interpretations include Bar-Kochva, *Seleucid Army*, 128–141, and E. Galili, 'Raphia 217 BCE revisited', *Scripta Clssica Israelica* 3, 1967–1977, 52–156.

[49] Polybios 5.86.5–6.

off the opposing Ptolemaic forces, which he did successfully. This was probably also done with the aim of killing or capturing Ptolemy himself, in which he failed, since Ptolemy had moved back to the centre of his array, amid the phalanx. Antiochos' concentration of force on his right, however, had left his left wing vulnerable, and the Ptolemaic cavalry force there drove off the Seleukid cavalry; the Ptolemaic mercenaries now defeated the Median and Arab light infantry who were exposed by the defeat of the cavalry, and their defeat in turn exposed the left wing of Antiochos' phalanx.

The subsequent conduct of the rival victorious cavalry forces seems to be the key to the battle. Antiochos lead his horsemen in pursuit of his defeated foes on the Ptolemaic left, possibly still in pursuit of Ptolemy, but it seems that the Ptolemaic cavalry on the other wing pulled up and turned to attack the main Seleukid phalanx. There seems no other explanation for the immediate defeat of that Seleukid phalanx, which was attacked by the Egyptian phalanx along with the 8000 mercenaries next to it. The other rival phalanxes, the Greek Egyptians and the Seleukid Argyraspides fought much harder, even though the former outnumbered the latter by at least two to one.

It was the defeat of the main Seleukid phalanx by the Egyptians which decided the fight, though Polybios gives a good deal of credit to the sudden appearance of King Ptolemy amid his phalangites. Certainly Ptolemy was in the right place at the right moment, while Antiochos remained in ignorance of the defeat of his infantry for some time. But Ptolemy was only in the phalanx because he had to escape from Antiochos' charge. (Presumably his wife had been sent back behind the lines, but Ptolemy seems to have been with the cavalry, like Antiochos.) Neither king could be said to have exercised any control other than in his immediate area. Such inspiration as Ptolemy delivered to his phalangites was thus accidental, but such accidents are what tip the balance in an even fight.

The casualties on the defeated side were, as usual, much the greater—10,000 dead and 4000 captured among the infantry, to Ptolemy's 1500 dead—though the defeat of the Ptolemaic cavalry resulted in many more dead there (700 to 300). The Ptolemaic elephants also suffered disproportionate casualties—sixteen to five dead—and the rest had been captured, which must mean that Antiochos managed to hold onto them.[50]

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[50] Polybios 5.86.2–4

Antiochos took post at Raphia to try to rally the fugitives, but many of his men simply kept going. He retreated to Gaza, and from there admitted defeat by asking for a truce to bury the dead.[51] It was at this point that the danger of leaving cities such as Sidon and Dor, and the Gerrha-Brochoi position, and Damascus, untaken behind him became all too clear. With a much reduced, beaten, and demoralized army he was in no position to hold onto his conquests, particularly when his communications back to northern Syria were liable to be severed. He retreated, no doubt in stages, and with as much of his army as he could recover, gathering up his garrisons on the way, all the way to Antioch.[52]

It is unlikely that Antiochos gave up the fight just yet. Antioch was a good base from which to assert his authority once more in his kingdom, and from which to make sure that Akhaios had not been inspired to attack him. (Akhaios had been campaigning in Pisidia during the year, but had been entangled in an awkward siege; he was in no condition to invade Syria, even if his troops would let him. Antiochos had to take precautions,[53] but Akhaios had also fallen into a dispute with Attalos, which prevented him from attempting to profit by Antiochos' defeat.[54]) Antiochos was now far enough from the enemy to be apprised of any further move from Egypt. So, apart from possible insubordination and an unlikely attack by Akhaios, he had to assume that Ptolemy might well invade his kingdom in revenge.

Ptolemy, however, did not attack. Polybios claims that he fell into his habitual lethargy again, which is irrelevant, since his government was in Sosibios' hands. The failure to follow up the victory, except in reoccupying Koile Syria, was therefore not the result of Ptolemy's indolence, but a deliberate policy decision. And this in turn implies that Ptolemy (and Sosibios) had a lot more immediate issues to face that conducting a revenge attack in northern Syria. Ptolemy therefore welcomed the arrival of plenipotentiaries from Antiochos charged with negotiating a peace treaty.

Polybios is vague on dates, but an inscriptuon which has been called the 'Raphia decree' states that peace was made after two years and two months of war. The war is thus reckoned to have begun with Antiochos' attack on Seleukeia in the spring of 219 (not when he invaded the Bekaa

[51] Polybios 5.86.7–87.1.
[52] Polybios 5.72.1–76.11.
[53] Polybios 5.77.1.
[54] Raphia decree = Austin 276.

in 221), so the peace was presumably made fairly soon after the battle at Raphia, which took place in June 217.[55] Antiochos' plenipotentiaries were his nephew Antipater and Theodotos Hemiolios. Ptolemy was, according to Polybios, so pleased with himself that he agreed to lenient terms all too quickly.[56] But one passage in the Raphia Decree, though it is difficult to interpret and put into context, seems to imply some trouble in the Egyptian forces, possible an officers' mutiny, which compelled Ptolemy to take refuge in the army's camp. His troops had to retake control over Palestine and the cities of Phoenicia which Antiochos had captured, and although Polybios suggests that the restoration of Ptolemaic control was generally welcomed, the difficult section of the Decree might well refer to difficulties in restoring control in Palestine or Phoenicia, perhaps caused by plundering by the victorious army. Given Antiochos' evacuation, this recovery may not have taken very long, but it seems evident that Ptolemy had more to worry about internally than did Antiochos. (An alternative interpretation of this passage is that it indicates a Ptolemaic invasion of Seleukid Syria, but this does not seem warranted, given the time scale and the absence of anything of that nature referred to by Polybios.)

Then, of course, there was the whole purpose and rationale of Ptolemaic control of Koile Syria, which was to defend Egypt. It could be argued, especially by those who had had enough of the fighting and the uncertainty of war, such as, no doubt, Ptolemy himself and Sosibios, that the result of the battle fully justified the conduct of the campaign, and the Ptolemaic control of the country. There was therefore no reason to invade Seleukid territory, an act which would only prolong the fighting, to no purpose, since Ptolemaic policy was not aimed at annexing territory.

The peace terms which were agreed so quickly also suggest that Ptolemy was not too confident that he could sustain a war for much longer. Palestine and Koile Syria were, of course, recovered, but Ptolemy did not insist on the return of Seleukeia-in-Pieria. It must have been very clear that Antiochos would fight to retain that city. Keeping the Ptolemaic army under arms for a long siege at such a distance from Egypt, with Antiochos' army close by and still formidable, particularly if called on to defend its home, was not an attractive prospect. The numerous defections

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55 Polybios 5.87.1–3.

56 Polybios 5.87.5–6; Raphia decree = Austin 276.

of higher officers during the war was also surely disturbing, particularly as there were apparently no desertions of any consequence in the other direction.

The appointment of Antipater and Theodotos Hemiolios, men of the highest rank in Antiochos' service, was a signal that Antiochos was serious in requesting peace, and since neither side had any demands on the other (for the issue of Seleukeia had been tacitly settled at the abortive negotiations two years before, and the issue of Koile Syria had been effectively settled by the battle) terms were quickly agreed. Sosibios returned with Antiochos' envoys to receive Antiochos' oath of ratification. And, of course, there was the unmentioned element that, once the treaty had been ratified by the personal oaths of the two kings, there would be no further war between them while they lived, so long as the terms were not violated too blatantly. Ptolemy could relax in the confidence of peace. With two kings still in their twenties, it could be assumed that the peace just concluded would last for some time, two or three decades at least. This therefore permitted the kings to attend to other problems they faced. It is characteristic of the differences between the two kingdoms that Ptolemy IV should be concerned with internal affairs, while Antiochos III attended the wider imperial problems. For there was one other element in the treaty which was missing. There was no mention of Akhaios.

Ptolemy therefore had abandoned his overt protection of Akhaios which had been articulated in the negotiations in Seleukeia, thereby leaving the way open for Antiochos to deal with that issue. The significance of the treaty is therefore more in its omissions than its contents. Ptolemy, despite his victory in battle, surrendered Seleukeia and abandoned Akhaios. Antiochos, despite his defeat in battle, gained Seleukeia, and was now able to attack Akhaios without violating his oath (as he would have, had Ptolemy insisted in protecting Akhaios in the treaty), and had gained strategic security for his Syrian front. It is usually assumed that Raphia meant Antiochos' defeat in the war; in fact, it was, in the context of the war as a whole, and in that of the Syrian Wars, no more than a tactical defeat. In larger terms, Antiochos had lost the battle but won the war.

CHAPTER TEN

# THE REVERSAL, THE PTOLEMAIC COLLAPSE

From the time the issue of the possession of Koile Syria and Palestine arose, Ptolemaic Egypt had been the more powerful of the two states contending for the prize. Its fleet patrolled the eastern Mediterranean from the Aegean to Cyrenaica; its army was powerful enough to deter Seleukid attacks in Syria, or defeat them. Its policy was to maintain that position, and so its strategic policy was defensive in general, though offensive in detail. The major test of this policy came in 246, when the Seleukid kingdom collapsed; Ptolemy III paraded through the kingdom's centre, and must have been tempted to seize large areas, but then he withdrew. He left the kingdom broken into fragments, some of which were annexed, though none of them were large, or even vital.

The result of this success was complacency, and the result of that complacency was near defeat in the Fourth Syrian War. After the victory in the battle of Raphia, however, the Ptolemaic regime could once more resort to its policy of maintaining its supremacy by doing as little as possible, much assisted by the indifference of Ptolemy Philopator, and the necessary unadventurousness of Sosibios' regime. It had been a very close battle, but complacency was clearly justified: if utterly unmilitary kings like Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV could win battles and break kingdoms, the Ptolemaic state was hardly threatened.

Yet, if the peace treaty is considered without reference to what Antiochos had done militarily before the battle, he could point to the retention of Ptolemaic territory and claim overall victory. The Seleukid kingdom, by contrast with the Ptolemaic, was in the hands of a vigorous and capable king, and his defeat had not shaken his regime at all. The contrast may be epitomized in the kings' different reactions to having an overbearing minister controlling affairs: Antiochos got rid of his, Ptolemy allowed Sosibios to continue in office. Not unconnected with this, in the next decade and a half, the positions of the two kingdoms were reversed; by the end of that time the Seleukid kingdom was stronger than ever, and the Ptolemaic kingdom was in desperate straits.

For the moment, however, Ptolemy basked in his victory. He spent several months in Koile Syria dealing with the negotiations for peace

and sorting out local problems. The people of the towns and cities he re-occupied are said to have demonstrated their attachment to the Ptolemaic royal house,[1] though the enthusiasm may also have been aimed at deterring punishment, for none of the 'liberated' towns had resisted conquest very strongly. An inscription set up in the Bekaa by an Alexandrian, dedicated to 'King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe, the Philopator Gods' is an indication, but to be on the safe side the dedication added Sarapis and Isis to his gods.[2] Then Philopator went back to Egypt, where he enjoyed further celebrations, and was generous to his army, but then he sank back into lethargy, leaving the work to one who clearly enjoyed it, Sosibios.

Complacency was further justified because the peace agreement meant that both kings had pledged their honour to maintain the peace between them. Antiochos could no longer attack Ptolemy's lands. Neither could Ptolemy attack Antiochos, of course, though this was not the main issue. The character of Ptolemy gave further assurance of Egypt's peaceable intentions, plus the fact that a good deal of Ptolemaic attention was fixed on events in Greece, where a very complicated situation had developed and where several wars being fought simultaneously.[3] Antiochos was not so intimately involved in affairs in Greece and the Aegean. So, free of worries about Egypt and not involved in Europe, Antiochos was now free to indulge in other adventures. The peace between the kings, of course and as usual, did not extend to the areas of diplomacy and intrigue, and in the next decade both rulers used their influence and their wealth to attempt to undermine the other's policies. Antiochos' first priority after the peace with Ptolemy was to deal with Akhaios.

Akhaios' kingdom was a state which was constantly fighting for room. He was at peace with Attalos I only for a short time, he attempted to intervene in a war in the Aegean, he sent his army on a campaign into Pisidia and Pamphylia. In all these enterprises, he had little to show for all his efforts, though Polybios suggests greater success, probably the result of Akhaiid propaganda.[4] His main difficulty was the smallness of his military manpower base. In his campaign into Pisidia, for example, he

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[1] Polybios 5.86.8–10; cf. Walbank 1.615–616.

[2] H. Salamé-Sarkies, 'Inscription au nom de Ptolémée IV Philopator trouvée dans le Nord de la Beqa', *Berytos* 34, 986, 207–209.

[3] W. Huss, *Untersuchungen zur Aussenpolitik Ptolemaios IV*, Munich 1976.

[4] An example is Polybios' report that Akhaios 'subjugated … most of Pamphylia', (Polybios 5.77.1), but no other evidence exists for his rule there, and an alternative interpretation is that the Pamphylians combined into an alliance which froze him out (J.D. Grainger, *The Cities of Pamphylia*, Oxford, 2009).

began with only 6000 infantry and 500 cavalry, and in order to mount the campaign against the enemy city (Selge) his general had to recruit at least double that number of men from amongst the Pamphylians. This effort left Akhaios so weakened in his home territory that Attalos of Pergamon was able to campaign unhindered all through northwestern Asia Minor.[5]

On the other hand, it is clear that Akhaios and his regime were acceptable to the inhabitants of his kingdom, which was based mainly in Lydia, but extended into central Asia Minor to include the cities strung along the road east to the Taurus, from which region he invaded Pisidia. He appears to have had peaceful relations with the Galatians—he and they had a common enemy in Attalos—and kept his distance from the Ptolemaic cities and from the Antigonid posts in Karia.[6]

Akhaios' antagonism towards Attalos was, of course, based on their rival claims to be king of Asia Minor. Attalos had conquered the area once and it had been Akhaios' achievement to drive him out. While Akhaios was busy in Pisidia Attalos campaigned along the Aeolian coast and he persuaded, or forced, many of the cities there and in Hellespontine Phrygia to come over to his alliance rather than Akhaios'. This, not surprisingly, was followed by renewed fighting between the two kings, in which it is probable that Akhaios retook much of this land: he is reported as menacing Prusias of Bithynia, which suggests that he controlled a good deal of Mysia to the north of Pergamon.[7] It seems clear that Akhaios was militarily the stronger of the two combatants, but that Attalos was able to survive without too much difficulty, partly by the use of his formidable citadel of Pergamon, and partly due to the good relations he and his family had developed with the Greek cities along the coast from the Propontis to Smyrna.[8]

This geopolitical situation in Asia Minor was tailor-made for Antiochos. He had never accepted Akhaios as anything but a traitor and a rebel and was clearly going to attack him when he was free to do so. Akhaios meanwhile was only one of a number of competing states within Asia Minor, and was increasingly seen as a nuisance to all of the rest.[9] Antio-

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[5] Polybios 5.72.1–78.6.

[6] Ma, *Antiochos III*, 54–58.

[7] Polybios 5.77.1–78.6.

[8] Allen, *Attalid Kingdom*, 39–58; R.B. McShane, *The Foreign Policy of the Attalids of Pergamon*, Urbana Ill, 1965, 65–73; McShane's interpretation is not widely accepted, but he provides a useful discussion.

[9] Polybios 5.77.1: Achaios 'made himself a serious object of dread to all the inhabitants on this side of the Taurus'.

chos' method of conquest was always to make contact, and an alliance if possible, with a power in the rear of his enemy. The treason of Theodotos and Panaitolos against Ptolemy was a version of this practice, as was his subversion of the officers of the Ptolemaic garrison in Seleukeia; in the war with Akhaios his method achieved full definition: it was Attalos who played that role. Antiochos 'came to an arrangement' with Attalos for a joint campaign.[10] Presumably there was also an arrangement over their future boundaries, in which Attalos was guaranteed his principality as it had been before 228, and perhaps with the extension he had made in 218, though he does not seem to have acquired more territory as a result of this war.

Antiochos began his campaign in the spring of 216. The war took four years to complete, though Akhaios was besieged in Sardis by 214. This is thought to be a fairly swift campaign by some, but it actually took three years to bring Akhaios to this situation, and another year and more before Sardis was taken.[11] Akhaios himself had taken much less time in pushing Attalos back to Pergamon in 222 (one campaigning season, or perhaps even less), and Seleukos III had been able to reach Lydia before being murdered, in a single march. Akhaios had therefore resisted well, no doubt supported by the people who had accepted him as king. It would seem that this time Attalos was not able to do much, and that all the fighting was being done by Antiochos' forces.

One reason for this lengthy process of conquest was that the campaign took place along a single route, the Royal Road, which was blocked by the numerous walled cities which had mainly been established by Antiochos' and Akhaios' royal predecessors—Laodikeia Katakekaumene, Antioch, Apameia-Kelainai, Seleukeia-Sidera, and others. There were other powers in Asia Minor with whom Antiochos was friendly: Mithradates of Pontos was his father-in-law, Ariarathes of Kappadokia was married to his aunt (and their son was later to be married to Antiochos' daughter). These two could be relied on to menace the Galatians (as could Attalos) so that they did not interfere. On the other hand, they were also related to Akhaios, and although Akhaios was clearly regarded as a menace by all his neighbours, the prospect of having Antiochos as his replacement, with all the power of the Seleukid empire at his disposal, was not neces-

[10] Polybios 5.107.4.

[11] P. Gauthier, *Nouvelles Inscriptions de Sardes*, II, Paris 1989, 15–19, argues for a short campaign; Ma, *Antiochos III*, 60–61, regards the conquest as being achieved 'with ease', but it took Antiochos three campaigning seasons (216–214) from the Taurus to Sardis.

sarily a comfortable thought. Prusias of Bithynia, for one, was prepared to meddle in affairs, and seized territory in Mysia and Hellespontine Phrygia which Antiochos later 'recovered'.[12] It would seem that Prusias at least was not pleased at the change.

Antiochos' support from within Asia Minor was therefore confined to Attalos I, whose participation was passive: he simply did not intervene when he could have attacked either side. No other kings can be shown to have taken part, though neutrality suited Antiochos more than Akhaios. From within Akhaios' kingdom also there is no suggestion that any of the people took Antiochos' side. (The earlier support by such men as Lysias for Antiochos' father may have been repeated, but we simply do not know; it may well be that Akhaios had eliminated the power of these men, or perhaps Attalos had done so earlier.) It is sometimes thought that the reason Polybios gave for Akhaios' troops mutinying when he tried to invade Syria in 220—that they would not attack 'their original and natural king'—might have brought them to support Antiochos.[13] There is no evidence for this, though, to be sure, there is little evidence for the campaign as a whole until the final siege of Sardis. The fact that the campaign took so long, and the siege lasted more than a year is, on the other hand, suggestive evidence that Akhaios had plenty of internal support.

One further convincing reason for Antiochos' slow progress was that support was given to Akhaios by Ptolemy. This assistance is well documented only at the end of the fighting, when Antiochos was besieging Sardis. Given the condition of affairs after the Fourth War, it may reasonably be presumed to have been offered from the beginning. Akhaios' connections with Egypt went through individuals in some of the great cities on his borders; Polybios names two of these men—Melankomas of Ephesos and Nikomachos of Rhodes—with the information that Akhaios had used these men (and others) as his intermediaries in other diplomatic contacts.[14] Details of earlier assistance to Akhaios by Ptolemy are not known, but Ptolemy had tried to have him included in the proposed peace discussed with Antiochos in 218, and his brother Magas had been in Asia Minor earlier. Antiochos had refused even to consider making

[12] Ma, *Antiochos III*, 60, n. 30.

[13] Polybios 5.57.6; Ma, *Antiochos III*, 61, suggests 'dynastic loyalty' along Akhaios' troops, but those troops had accepted Akhaios' rule for nearly ten years, and had not originally objected to Akhaios' assumption of the royal title.

[14] Polybios 8.15.9–10.

peace with Akhaios, but Ptolemy's interest was clear. However, let us be clear on this: Ptolemy supported Akhaios against Antiochos, but not because he was Akhaios. Ptolemy's interest was in weakening Antiochos, or preventing Antiochos increasing in power; it did not matter who he dealt with—Attalos or Akhaios, or anyone else—so long as his diplomatic partner opposed Antiochos. It must have become clear in Alexandria very quickly that the peace treaty with Antiochos had been a strategic defeat.

The final Ptolemaic intervention came when Akhaios had been defeated and was penned up in the acropolis at Sardis, the city itself having been taken and sacked (a good sign of the absence of supporters of Antiochos, one would have thought). Polybios notes that there had been a lot of skirmishing around the city, which suggests that it took Antiochos a long time to establish the siege of the city; then the siege took more than a year before the city was taken; and even then Akhaios still held out in the citadel.[15] The city was taken when a Cretan officer, Lagoras, noticed a weak point in the defences; Theodotos again got the job of climbing the hill to exploit the opportunity; it is quite suitable that Lagoras was yet another mercenary to have changed sides from Ptolemy to Antiochos.[16]

Sosibios in Alexandria sent another Cretan officer, Bolis, to extract Akhaios from the city. He was given ten talents and promised more on success. This is an indication of the value a free and live Akhaios was to the Ptolemaic government. He was presumably intended to continue the fight, or at least to exist as a threat to Antiochos from an Egyptian safe haven. Bolis proved to be untrustworthy, however, and the plot was betrayed to Antiochos.[17] Akhaios was captured as he was escaping and was executed by crucifixion, after mutilation, a process designed to eliminate his charisma as king.[18] In turn, this is also an indication of the threat he had posed to Antiochos. The citadel of Sardis still held out, but an internal dispute between Laodike, Akhaios' widow, and the governor of the city, Aribazos, demoralized both of them and the garrison; they surrendered.[19]

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[15] Polybios 8.15.1–2.
[16] Polybios 7.15.2–18.10; he had been at the first fight south of Berytos in 219 (Polybios 5.61.9).
[17] Polybios 8.15.1–20.
[18] Polybios 8.21.8.
[19] Polybios 8.21.9.

It may have been the evidence of the strong Ptolemaic support for Akhaios shown by Bolis' mission which encouraged Antiochos to mount a riposte. No doubt Bolis told all when he changed sides, and Polybios clearly had good sources for all this, though perhaps all was only fully revealed when Akhaios' archives were read. In Antiochos' campaign in Koile Syria two major factors had emerged as important: the fragility of the loyalty to the Ptolemaic regime of the higher officers, particularly the mercenaries such as Theodotos, Panaitolos, Lagoras and Bolis; by contrast, there was the fundamental loyalty of the cities and peoples of the country to the Ptolemaic government. Most of the cities Antiochos captured had either been betrayed by disloyal officers, or had been taken by assault—Philotera and Skythopolis in Palestine had bargained to retain their status. Except perhaps for those taken in the spring of 217 (when Antiochos moved quickly as far as Gaza), no city had actively welcomed Antiochos and his army. Some indeed, notably Sidon and perhaps Dor, had resisted all through the war, and this resistance had clearly been one of the reasons for Antiochos' final failure, quite apart from the defeat at Raphia.

There were also other reasons, and the career of Akhaios was another element in Antiochos' problem. He had been king in Asia Minor in a succession which included Attalos I, Antiochos Hierax, and, forty years before, Lysimachos. Since the defeat of Antigonos Monophthalamos in 301, the Seleukid kings of the direct line of descent had ruled Asia Minor for only 36 years (281–245); the region had been independent under its own king for over fifty years in that time: 301–281 under Lysimachos, 245–228 under Antiochos Hierax, 228–222 under Attalos, and 222–213 under Akhaios. Detaching the area from direct Seleukid rule had been easily accomplished, both in 245 and in 220.

The same could be said of Baktria, of Parthia, of Persis, and, for a short time anyway, of Media (under Molon). That is, the Seleukid kingdom was a ramshackle organisation with a tendency to fragment, given the opportunity. Antiochos III himself had seen this happen in his own reign, and it had taken over a decade simply to return to the position as it had been in his grandfather's time. One of the lessons was that only the king could restore matters: using an agent such as Akhaios did not work.

The kingdom was composed of territories with differing populations and incompatible traditions and histories, held together only by the person of the king; dynastic loyalty did exist, as Molon's experience showed, but it was confined to those who counted themselves Macedonian, and perhaps Greek (and in Baktria, the independence movement was headed

by Greeks). All these differing sections could form viable independent states if they got the chance. The Seleukid kings had to struggle all through their reigns to hold the empire together.

It is clear from his career as king that Antiochos was a warrior; there is scarcely a year during his reign when he was not on campaign. Thanks to the relatively good sources for his time, it is possible to detect certain characteristics in his approach to a campaign: he used a professional army rather than conscripts, he made alliances with a state in the enemy's rear so as to distract him, he recruited former enemies very readily, and he had the ability to retain their loyalty even in difficult times. These campaigns were on the whole successful, within limits—at least until the last two—and he extended his kingdom in several directions.

This was not enough to ensure that the kingdom's unity would continue. It was also necessary to develop a new fundamental loyalty to the dynasty and the kingdom amongst the population, which in effect meant that the oligarchs who ruled in the localities needed to be attracted to and locked into patterns of loyalty and participation in government. This was one of the main lessons from the collapse of the kingdom in 246 and after. This has already been noted in Asia Minor, where Akhaios' decade of rule was partly based on such an oligarchy, as well as on his acceptance by his soldiers. This was therefore another aspect of Antiochos' work. Only in a few cases, however, did this appeal reach beyond the Greco-Macedonian population. The Egyptian experience, shortly to be discussed, will have reinforced that exclusiveness.

The basic structures already existed. The spread of cities inhabited by Greeks and Macedonians throughout the kingdom, the use of the *epistates* as a means of connecting king and cities politically, the enrollment of the young men in the army for their compulsory military service, were all methods at the service of a wider political integration. Antiochos also paid much more attention than his predecessors to the religious aspect of the kingdom, boosting the cult of the dynasty, which always involved the oligarchs in ceremonies and local offices. Cults of the king and queen individually were added to that of the dynasty as a whole.[20] Above all, of course, it was the success of the king in his conquests, and in ruling for over thirty years, which were the real causes of the revival of the kingdom; in this case success and familiarity bred loyalty.

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[20] Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *Sarmarkhand to Sardis*, 202–210.

Antiochos devoted the decade after suppressing Akhaios to reinforcing his rule, reviving unity, and recovering lost lands. Having removed the threat of Akhaios, and in the process increased his own resources in manpower and finance—the Asia Minor cities were wealthy—he was now relatively safe from attack from that quarter. His next intention was to establish his authority in the eastern provinces, but before he did so he took two measures in other areas. In the north he campaigned into Armenia, and reduced the king there, Xerxes, to submission, then gave him his own sister Antiochis as his wife.[21] In the discussions after Xerxes submitted it was suggested that Antiochis' son Mithradates be installed as king in Xerxes' place. Her previous marriage is not documented; Polybios calls Mithradates her 'natural son', whatever that means—possibly Antiochos adopted him. However, by marrying Antiochis to Xerxes, Antiochos might have been intending that Mithradates should eventually inherit the kingdom. In the end Antiochis murdered her husband. Antiochos was usually wary of elevating his relatives to thrones, after the experience of Molon and Akhaios, and, of course, of Queen Berenike. Next year, 211, Antiochos set off to the east, but first he instituted, or agreed to, a measure designed to subvert Ptolemaic control over Koile Syria.

From about 212 a new set of coins began to be produced at Arados, minted to the Ptolemaic standard but carrying dates according to Arados' own era, which began in 259 BC.[22] The other Phoenician cities had only very rarely coined since they had been incorporated in the Ptolemaic kingdom, where the strong grip exercised by the government extended even to small change. Arados' action no doubt had several motives: to encourage trade between it and the Ptolemaic kingdom generally, to supply a deficiency in the quantity of coinage in circulation, and to compete with official Ptolemaic coins. The cost to the Ptolemaic government of the victorious war against Antiochos' invasions had been great, and one of the expedients the Ptolemaic government resorted to was a debasement of the silver coinage. This reinforced an inflationary trend which had begun even before the war. Silver coinage was overwhelmingly used by the Ptolemaic government to finance its overseas trade and foreign

[21] Polybios 8.23.1–5.

[22] O. Mørkholm, 'The Ptolemaic Coinage in Phoenicia and the Fifth War with Syria', in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, *Studia Hellenistica* 27, Louvain 1983, 241–251.

policies, and this meant exporting silver. A tight government system of collecting silver for re-use and reminting on its own standard as it arrived in the country was imposed.[23]

It would seem therefore that the city of Arados spotted a commercial opportunity when it began producing coins on the Ptolemaic standard. This would also have a political effect, for it was an implicit criticism of the Ptolemaic government, and as such it presumably had Antiochos' prior and full approval. It is noticeable that the minting of these coins, beginning in 212, was ended in 205. This was exactly the period during which Antiochos was on his eastern campaigns: either Arados was indulging in a private economic policy which was stopped by the king when he found out on his return, or he approved it and absented himself to avoid responsibility—or, again, it ended for some other reason, such as Arados running out of silver. On the whole, given Antiochos' policy of tightening his general control over his kingdom, and his earlier policy of appeasing Arados, it seems most likely to be a collaboration between the city and the king.

The effect on the other Phoenician cities, which were still within the Ptolemaic system, may well have been considerable. Here was a fellow Phoenician city, which had considerable local autonomy, able to cock a snook at the mighty Ptolemaic state, whereas Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Tripolis, and other smaller places, all of which had experienced conquest, occupation or siege in the previous decade, had fallen back under the tight Ptolemaic control. These cities were self-consciously and proudly Phoenician, and when they finally got the chance they all opted for independence, but Arados was the only one to have succeeded partly in that ambition so far.[24] Combined with the internal inflation within the kingdom, the cities' experiences would contribute to undermining the Ptolemaic state's authority and prestige.

Antiochos meanwhile was building up a considerable stock of prestige for himself. The elimination of Akhaios marked his determined recovery from defeat, and marked also a defeat for his Ptolemaic rival, who had made no secret of his diplomatic support for Akhaios. Any assumption that this support went further than intrigue and diplomacy was clearly a bluff, which Antiochos called: the defection of Sosibios' agent Bolis the

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[23] T. Reekmans, 'Economic and Social Repercussions of the Ptolemaic Copper Inflation', *Chron. Eg.* 48, 1949, 324–342, and 'The Ptolemaic Copper Inflation', *Studia Hellenistica* 7, Leiden 1951, 61–120.

[24] Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia*.

Cretan was decisive. Sosibios could not possibly risk a new war with Antiochos, for this would leave his king forsworn. Antiochos now conducted an expedition into the eastern regions, beginning in 211, and lasting until 206. In the process he fought the Parthians, Elburz mountaineers, and the Baktrian king; he compelled all of these to acknowledge his supremacy, and did the same with an Indian king called Sophagasenos, and on the way back some Arabian rulers beside the Persian Gulf were also induced to submit to him.[25] The expedition did not result in the acquisition—or the 'recovery', as Antiochos would presumably have put it—of very much territory except for some parts of northeastern Iran taken from the Parthians, but he did compel all the rulers in the region—Euthydemos, Arsakes, Sophagasenos—to enter into defined political relations with him. These various agreements produced a regime of peace and political balance in the east which lasted for the rest of his reign—once again it seems that the various kings' peace agreements lasted until one of the principals died.

When he returned to the west, in 205, Antiochos first went back into Anatolia, when the weight of his presence gradually expanded his authority.[26] His viceroy in the area, Zeuxis, had been active in expanding the king's authority even while he was in the east, and the king's presence from 205 onwards gave added impetus to this process. The appointment of Zeuxis, in effect in place of Akhaios, is an indication of the recognition by Antiochos of the geopolitical distinctiveness of Asia Minor from the rest of the kingdom, just as his recognition of the kingship of Euthydemos accepted the separateness of Baktria. Cities along the Ionian coast, in Karia in the southwest, and in the Hellespontine area of the northwest, acknowledged his authority, including such prestigious cities as Ephesos, Miletos, and Alexandria Troas. Prusias of Bithynia's encroachments were repelled and the Pergamene kingdom was now almost entirely enclosed within Seleukid territory. Antiochos gained full access to the Aegean Sea over a considerable distance. Little or no fighting seems to have been involved, but the king was accompanied by his field army on his visit. This was the factor, presumably, which convinced the king's new subjects to accept his authority without argument.

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[25] Polybios 10.27.1–31.3, 48.1–49.15, 11.39.1–6, 13.9.1–5; for modern discussions, cf. Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, ch. 7; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *Samarkhand to Sardis*, 197–198; earlier discussions are in W.W. Tarn, *The Greeks of Bactria and India*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1951, and A.K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, Cambridge 1957; Narain also wrote the chapter in *CAH* VIII, ch. 1.

[26] On this process, and its results, see Ma, *Antiochos III*, 63–73.

There can be little doubt that Antiochos was kept fully aware of the situation within the Ptolemaic territories. The Aradian coinage presupposes constant commercial contact, and therefore political contact. Ptolemy IV was notoriously addicted to display and extravagance, which was part of his embracing the concept to *tryphe*. He had distributed 300,000 gold pieces as a reward to his soldiers after the victory at Raphia, and gave out presents to the 'priests, the temple staff, and the rest of the people'. A good deal of this came from the loot acquired in the recapture of the cities taken by Antiochos, but by giving it away, Ptolemy was wasting it.[27] Some time in the decade after his victory he financed the construction of a huge ship, a 'forty', the biggest vessel ever built in the ancient world. It was also virtually useless, except as a floating palace.[28] In the circumstances this was an absolutely unnecessary extravagance, but one fully in keeping with the prevailing ideology of *tryphe*. And, of course, all the other expensive actions of the government continued—the elephant hunts, for example.[29] The employment of mercenaries evidently was reduced in part, for their recruitment in 219–217 was only an exceptional effort, but the army and the fleet will have been a constant expense, and mercenaries were used, it seems, to garrison the imperial possessions. The bureaucratic system developed by Ptolemy II inevitably grew in size, complexity, and expense. No one in Alexandria was in the least interested in reducing it or its cost. After all, Ptolemy IV, assisted by his minister Sosibios, had won the war, or so it was publicly proclaimed, as in the Raphia decree.[30]

Ptolemy posed as a peacemaker in the Aegean conflicts, operating to mediate between enemies, usually along with a varying group of Greek cities, a process which enhanced his prestige, and even brought some cities under his wing. This was successful in the War of the Allies in Greece in 217 (the 'Social' War), in the aftermath of the victory in the Fourth Syrian war, when Ptolemaic prestige was high, but not so in the war between Rome and Macedon,[31] despite at least three attempts,[32] since neither of these powers was at all willing to concede any prestige to

[27] Raphia Decree = Austin 276.

[28] Athenaios 5.23e; A.W. Sleeswyk and F. Meijer, 'Launching Philopator's "Forty"', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 23, 1994, 115–118; Casson, *Ships and Seamanship*, 108–112.

[29] Austin 281.

[30] Austin 276.

[31] Polybios 5.100.9.

[32] Polybios 11.4.1; Livy 27.30.4–12 and 28.7.13–15; Gruen, *Hellenistic World*, 677.

him. At the same time Philopator kept up his relations with his Greek allies, notably Rhodes and some of the Cretan cities. Rhodes joined in the diplomatic interventions in the war in Greece, and Chios and Byzantion were also involved. Holding Itanos still, Ptolemy was necessarily involved in Cretan affairs, where an island-wide war developed. Several cities in mainland Greece put up statues to the king, or to Sosibios, no doubt as a result of help in a problem or after a monetary subvention.[33]

The various territories along the northern Mediterranean coast which he had inherited from his father, scattered from Kilikia to the Hellespont and Thrace, were generally maintained, but the conquests of Antiochos in Asia Minor after 216 posed a serious threat. All the Ptolemaic outposts along the Asia Minor coast became vulnerable, not only because their hinterland was now Seleukid, but because, since the capture of the Ptolemaic ships at Ptolemais in 219, Antiochos had a considerable fleet. Ptolemy did not improve his kingdom's chances in a future war by using so many resources in building his 'forty': they would have been better used to replace his lost quadriremes and quinqueremes.

Ptolemy's Asian cities were also vulnerable in the sense that some of them might well prefer Seleukid domination to Ptolemaic. Ptolemaic control was often fairly light, and it was therefore liable to the overthrown by internal changes in the cities. The practices of intrigue between the two kingdoms would certainly allow such changes of allegiance without disturbing the overall peace agreement—as in the case of Akhaios. The principality of Olympichos in Karia disintegrated about this time, and this was an area where Ptolemy, Antiochos, and the Macedonian king all had interests.

Yet so long as Ptolemy IV and Antiochos III both lived and ruled a full-scale war was highly unlikely. It would take a major and deliberate breach of the terms of peace to force one or other of them into a new war, and Antiochos was always busy, while Ptolemy was apparently uninterested. In the aftermath of the successful conclusion of peace Ptolemy had held a celebration of victory, and an assembly of priests had pledged their loyalty. In the inscription recording this meeting, the 'Raphia decree', Ptolemy's conduct in honouring the gods is emphasized, as is the rewards he gave the priests, carefully listed by them.[34] Like his predecessors he

33 Ptolemy IV at Rhodes (*IG* XII.1.37), Oropos (*IG* VII 293); Sosibios was *proxenos* at Tanagra (*IG* VII 507) and Orchomenos (*IG* VII 3168).

34 Austin 276.

devoted considerable resources to embellishing temples in all parts of Egypt, from Syene in the south to Tanis in the Delta, with a strong concentration in the area of Thebes.[35]

The attention paid to the Egyptian gods and priests was clearly designed above all to attract the loyalty of the latter, presumably in the belief that they could in turn guarantee the loyalty, or at least the acquiescence, of the general population.[36] This turned out to be a mistake, for it had encouraged the government to impose increasing burdens on the peasantry on the assumption that there would be no serious complaints. The priests, of course, found themselves effectively part of the government after a century of being petted and bribed by all the kings from Ptolemy I onwards. The social divisions in Egypt were between rulers and ruled, not between Greeks and Egyptians as such, though it is a fact that the Greeks are overwhelmingly counted among the rulers.

The effective separation of Alexandria from the rest of Egypt, symbolized by the Alexandrians' rather dismissive description of the country as the *chora*, was a further sign of the developing problem, because it indicates an ignorance of the former for the latter, an ignorance which extended into the royal government. The educated Egyptians knew perfectly well what this meant: the 'Oracle of the Potter', a later prediction-cum-hope that the Ptolemies would be driven out, refers to Alexandria as 'the city of the foreigners', and hankered for the return of the royal centre to Memphis.[37] In a survey of the occasions when the Ptolemaic kings actually travelled into the *chora*, one researcher has listed 25 visits by Ptolemy II, III, and IV—over a period of 65 years—an average of one visit every two and a half years.[38] Further, four of these visits were to Pelusion on the occasions of wars, and one was to 'Ethiopia'. This is not, of course, a full account, only those visits recorded and discovered by modern researchers can be listed, but it is a good sign that the main attention of the government was always in Alexandria. The *chora* was there to produce tax revenues.

It may be even more significant in this immediate context that, although Ptolemy Philopator is noted as visiting the *chora* seven times, two of those were in the context of the war (in 219 to Pelusion, in 217

[35] Listed by Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 329–330.
[36] See Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, ch. 3.
[37] Austin 326; the date of the document is probably second century BC.
[38] W. Clarysse, 'The Ptolemies visiting the Egyptian Chora', in L. Mooren (ed.), *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World, Studia Hellenistica* 36, Louvain 2000, 29–53.

to Raphia) and no visits are recorded after 217. No doubt Sosibios and his group were unwilling to let the king go far out of their sight, but also the reputation of the king for sloth, self-indulgence, and luxury—*tryphe*'s effects—is so widespread that it cannot have been invented, though perhaps it has been exaggerated.[39]

The Fourth Syrian War increased the burden on the Egyptians in the *chora* still more. Taxation, even if it was not formally increased, was relentless. The inflation which set in from the 220s affected in particular the copper and bronze coinage, so that, since taxation was levied in values of silver, the quantity of coinage needed, or the amount of produce collected to satisfy the demands of the tax collectors, was steadily increased. No doubt the government was aware of all this, but it meant it was effectively an increase in taxation without a new tax being imposed, so it was wholly acceptable to the collectors and to the government—in effect, an annual 'stealth' tax. The levy of Egyptian manpower for the decisive battle was a further burden, removing 20,000 prime working men from their homes and fields, probably for at least three years. Their reward was pay, which they had to spend even on active service, and a share of the gold distributed to the soldiers at the celebration of victory. This would not go far—perhaps four or five gold pieces per man—but the men would certainly return home with some wealth and with considerable local prestige. And they had been quartered and trained in Alexandria.[40]

No doubt it was naively assumed that the restoration of peace would see a lessening of these burdens. Certainly the Egyptian troops were dismissed with thanks and a reward, but there is no sign that the tax burden was reduced once peace was made. Governments can always find ways of spending tax receipts, and can always find good reasons not to reduce spending. Even so it was ten years before internal trouble in the *chora* developed sufficiently to produce a major threat to the Ptolemaic regime. This is not to deny that there were less serious troubles in the decade between the peace and the definitive outbreak of a major rebellion, but Ptolemy's actions in that time are almost exclusively recorded in terms of foreign affairs.

The suggestion of major trouble in that decade (i.e. 217–207) comes from a passage in Polybios' history which seems to imply that the discharged Egyptian soldiers caused serious trouble from the time of their

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39 C. Préaux, 'Polybe et Ptolémée Philopator', *Chron Eg*, 64, 1965, 364–375.

40 I am tempted to refer to the Great War soldiers' song with the line 'How're you gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Paree'.

discharge, yet a later passage puts the development of real difficulties for the Ptolemaic regime later.[41] The first passage is best regarded as a coda to the account of the war and the subsequent peace treaty, on the lines of arrogance in victory bringing *hubris*, and an anticipation of the later trouble.

Another note in Polybios can seem to suggest support for this early date for the rebellion, but it does not. Antiochos III and Philip V of Macedon at one point offered Ptolemy assistance to put down the rebellion, but this was refused.[42] The date is not stated, but since Antiochos was in the east from 212 to 206, that period is obviously excluded, and he would scarcely be in a mood to assist Ptolemy against rebels between 216 and 213 when he himself was fighting a rebel who was being assisted by Ptolemy. So this offer must date from after 206, which is also the time when the revolt had become very serious.

There was no doubt trouble in Egypt in the years between the peace and the rebellion, but there is no sign that it was serious enough to be considered a rebellion. There was a tradition, dating from pharaonic times, of rural strikes, called *anachoresis*, in which farmers fled from their villages to take refuge in the desert, or perhaps in temples. This allowed them to evade their tax obligations, since they had not cultivated their fields and so could not be taxed. When there were a lot of these strikes, the government was helpless, and could only resort to persuasion, often by agreeing to reduce taxes. Afterwards, of course, any tax reductions were removed, and the process began again.[43]

So we may assume more or less constant rural difficulties after 217, and probably before then as well, but not on a seriously disruptive level, and perhaps they were not much more prevalent than in the past. This was clearly not sufficient to cause real problems for the Ptolemaic government, which showed no discomfort in its foreign relations at the time. The normal incidence of low-level banditry and rural crime was taking place, and this, being normal, would not bother the royal government unduly. But, as Polybios points out, the presence among the Egyptian population of a substantial number of men trained to arms was a new factor, one which was present for the first time since the really onerous tax regime

41 Polybios 5.107.1–3 and 14.12.

42 Polybios 15.20.1.

43 G. Posener, 'L'anachorésis dans l'Egypte pharaonique', in J. Bingen, et al., (ed.), *Le Monde grec, homage à Cl. Préaux*, Brussels 1975, 667–669 and F. Dunand, 'L'exode rural en Egypte à l'époque hellénistique', *Ktema* 5, 1987, 137–150.

had been imposed by Ptolemy Philadelphos. It was no doubt these men, who might well by now be the leaders of their local communities where their abilities and rewards made them prominent, who were the leaders of the rebellion which broke out, or built up, in 207.[44]

What it was that sparked the full-scale rebellion in that year is not known, but it took place in the south of the country, the area least hellenised and most attached to the old Egyptian religion. Its initial success was marked by the coronation as pharaoh at Thebes of a man called Herwennefer.[45] His claim to the kingship, in true Hellenistic style, came as a result of his victory in battle over the regular Ptolemaic forces. The beginning of the rebellion and Herwennefer's reign is dated to about 207, though the earliest documentary indication of Herwennefer is dated in November 206; by then he was already king and the start of the rebellion must therefore be dated up to a year earlier.[46] The fighting was constant. Ptolemaic troops were still being sent from Thebes to fight in the southernmost regions for three more years, even after Herwennefer's coronation there, but Thebes itself finally fell to the rebel Pharaoh in 204.[47]

It was just about this time the Ptolemy IV died. Exactly when is not clear, since his death was kept secret for some time. It eventually became public knowledge in the summer of 204, but it had happened

[44] Polybios describes his method at this point (14.11–12) as providing a discursive account of affairs in Egypt, but without all the details, and most of it is lost. In the process he comments that 'late in his reign', Philopator faced a nasty rebellion (14.12.4). The start of the rebellion is thus undated and unlocated in the account, though it might have been specified elsewhere, but 'late' in the reign must mean towards its end. Philopator reigned for seventeen years, and 'late' must refer to the second half at least, and preferably to the last quarter of that period—after, say, 208; see Walbank 2.434–437.

[45] This has provoked several studies: the original research was by C. Préaux, 'Esquisse d'une histoire des revolutions égyptiennes sous les Lagides', *Chron. Eg.* 11, 1936, 522–552. Since then the following have been significant: P.W. Pestman, 'Harmachis et Anchmachis, deux rois indigènes du temps des Ptolémées', *Chron. Eg.* 40, 1966, 157–170; K. Vandorpe, 'The Chronology of the Reigns of Hurganophor and Chaonnophris', *Chron Eg* 61, 1986, 299–302; W. Peremans, 'Les Revolutions Egyptiennes sous les Lagides', in H. Maehler and V.M. Strock, *Das Ptolemäische Agypten*, Mainz 1978, 39–50; B.C. McGing, 'Revolt Egyptian Style: Internal Opposition to Ptolemaic Rule', *AfP* 43, 1997, 273–314; T. Polanski, 'Oriens Militans: Extreme Traditionalist Movements in the Provincial Populations of the Ptolemaic Egypt and their Ideology', *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilisation* 9, 1999, 23–48; Viesse; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, ch. 5.

[46] Vandorpe, 'Chronology'; see also McGing 'Revolt Egyptian Style', and Viesse.

[47] Polybios 15.25.3–6.

some months earlier.[48] One can see good reasons for secrecy: the king's death could only encourage the rebels, who were clearly doing quite well already; the capture of Thebes did in fact follow not long after the announcement of the king's death. Then the king's death also opened up the possibility of another attack by Antiochos III, who was no longer restrained by his oath of peace of 217. These two elements were connected, for an internal disturbance in Egypt provided Antiochos with as good a chance of victory as the internal troubles of the Seleukid kingdom had done for Ptolemy III in 246.

However, the reason for concealing the king's death is not generally given as any of these, but is ascribed to the desire of the Philopator's closest colleagues in government to establish themselves securely in power as regents for the new child king—and to enrich themselves in the process. This, of course, is the line Polybios took, since it fitted well with the contempt he had already expressed for the king's conduct while he was alive. Certainly the king's leading councillor was Sosibios, a man who had carried out the same ruthless policies in order to establish Philopator himself in power back in 222–221, by overseeing the killings of the king's mother and brothers, and Kleomenes. Now there were also in the inner circle the more unsavoury group of Agathokleia, the king's mistress and the new king's wet nurse, her brother Agathokles and their mother Oinanthe. Sosibios can be assumed to have acted for political motives; no one has ever assumed that Agathokles and family had anything other than personal power and wealth as their aims.

The kingdom certainly required a regent. The new king was only a child, the six-year-old son of Ptolemy IV and his sister-wife Arsinoe, who became Ptolemy V, and later took the epithet Epiphanes. Sosibios and Agathokles had been running the administration for Ptolemy IV for years, and so assumed the task. They organized a *coup* in the palace in which Arsinoe, who was probably the regent designated by Philopator, was murdered, perhaps by Agathokleia who could enter the women's quarters without too much suspicion. This task completed, Sosibios and Agathokles announced both deaths to the court and the palace guard, and

[48] Justin 30.26; the dating is discussed by F.M. Walbank, 'The Accession of Ptolemy Epiphanes: a Problem in Chronology', *JEA* 22, 1936, 20–34; E. Bikerman, 'L'Avènement de Ptolémée Epiphane', *Chron. Eg.* 39, 1940, 124–131; K. Abel, 'Der Tod des Ptolemaios IV Philopator bei Polybios', *Hermes* 95, 1967, 72–90; there is one document dated by Philopator's reign to 22 July 204 (G. Casanova, 'Una datazione tardiva di Tolomeo IV e il banchiere Protos de Crocodilopolis', *Aegyptus* 68, 1988, 13–18) but this is generally accepted as posthumous, and that Philopator died some months earlier.

invested the child as King Ptolemy V. A will was produced in which the two men were appointed regents, though it is, and was, widely regarded as a forgery.[49]

Presumably the two regents felt that the various threats facing the kingdom would be so obvious to such a gathering that support would coalesce behind them, and that they had such a firm grip on the administration that they would be able to defeat any challenges; after all, Sosibios had been through this process once already. But Sosibios died soon afterwards,[50] leaving the more disliked of the two, Agathokles, as sole regent: his mother and sister were in charge of the upbringing of the child king. True to his priorities Agathokles sent his internal rivals on diplomatic missions while he hoped to consolidate his position in Alexandria—shades of the actions of Hermeias twenty years before. Sosibios' son Ptolemy was sent to Philip V of Macedon; Ptolemy of Megalopolis went to Rome; Pelops, until then governor of Cyprus, went to see Antiochos. The man who had actually organized the murder of Arsinoe, Philammon, was made governor of Cyrenaica.[51]

The situation of these several powers with regard to each other and to Egypt was particularly delicate just at that time. In the west Rome was about to finish off the war with Carthage, and Scipio Africanus was preparing to invade Africa. The war between Rome and Philip V had been finished a couple of years before, and Philip and the Aitolian League had made peace with each other in 205. For a brief period Greece was more or less at peace, but Philip was as restless and as ambitious as ever. Antiochos III was in Asia Minor from 204 onwards, mopping up cities. The best documented of these is Amyzon in Karia, which had been Seleukid until Olympichos defected to the Macedonian service; Antiochos, through the agency of Zeuxis, now recovered that city and pressed on others in the area.[52]

Philip V's predecessor Antigonos III Doson had campaigned in Karia, at which point Olympichos had changed masters in the 220s, at the time when Attalos of Pergamon had briefly overrun all Anatolia. Philip had therefore inherited Olympichos' pretensions to local authority, though

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49 Polybios 15.25.4.

50 The date is not known, but he disappears from Polybios' narrative almost at once.

51 Polybios 15.25.11–13.

52 Sherwin-White and Kurht, *Samarkhand to Sardis*, 165–167; for one crucial inscription cf. J. Ma, P.S. Derow, and A.R. Meadows, 'RC 38 (Amyzon) Reconsidered', *ZPE* 109, 1995, 71–80; J. and L. Robert, *Fouilles d'Amyzon en Carie, I, Exploration, histoire, monnaies, et Inscriptions*, Paris 1983.

he had not been able to maintain control over the whole region, which had dissolved into independent cities; now Antiochos was recovering his own. Philip had been fully occupied with wars in Greece and against Rome since his accession, and it was clear to many that his relationship with Rome was very fragile. Further, the two families of Philip and Antiochos had long been friendly, even allied, until the repudiation of Stratonike by Demetrios II, but that was now long in the past. We have no evidence for their relations before 203, but their interests rarely conflicted, while those of both kings with Ptolemy were constantly abrasive. Except in Karia the interests of Philip and Antiochos scarcely intersected, and certainly they had little to quarrel about. So the arrival of envoys from Agathokles at their courts and at Rome produced differing reactions.

Ptolemy of Megalopolis was to announce the death of Ptolemy IV to the Senate in Rome. The king had had several diplomatic contacts with Rome, so this could count as a normal, courteous, diplomatic gesture. He was also to call the Senate's attention to the concentration of Antiochos' forces in Asia Minor, but there is no sign that the Senate showed any interest—the war with Carthage was still on, and nearer powers, such as Aitolia and Macedon filled Roman peripheral vision for the present.[53] At Pella Ptolemy son of Sosibios was to attempt to negotiate a dynastic marriage between the two royal families, together with a defensive alliance between the two kingdoms directed against Antiochos III if he should attack Egypt.[54] The suggestion of the marriage of a six-year old king to a daughter of Philip, who was about the same age, was clearly a fairly desperate measure, and Philip showed no interest. A war with Antiochos was obviously expected in Alexandria. Pelops met Antiochos with a rather different message: to remind the king of the peace terms concluded with Ptolemy IV and ask him to continue them;[55] the treaty was thus no longer in force, and if peace was to be maintained a new peace agreement would be required.

All this was sensible, even potentially adroit, diplomacy by Agathokles, though it seems more likely to have been Sosibios' scheme than his. The problem was that it required an unusual degree of acquiescence and diplomatic ignorance on the part of the others to be effective. Equally sensible was Agathokles' despatch of Skopas of Aitolia to Greece with a

53 Polybios 15.25.14.
54 Polybios 15.25.13.
55 Polybios 15.25.13.

large sum of money and instructions to hire mercenaries.[56] Not only did Agathokles have to guard against a possible war in the north, but he had to stifle Herwennefer in Thebes as soon as possible. He also needed to recruit troops for the palace guard who were loyal to him personally, for those he already had were recruited by Sosibios. As it happened, none of the diplomatic attempts bore fruit—or at least not the fruit the Ptolemaic court hoped for.

All this activity was scarcely secret. Skopas was a well-known Aitolian politician and commander, the sort of man whose activities are always noticed, and the recruitment of troops was a very public activity, particularly in such a sensitive political and military area as Greece. He himself had been a major political force in Aitolia for many years, and he tended to recruit in his homeland. Philip proved to be quite without interest in pursuing the idea of a dynastic connection with Ptolemy, but the very arrival of the envoy drew attention to the new weakness of the Ptolemaic regime. He was contemplating acting in Karia, where Rhodes was also interested, and Rhodes was a prominent friend of Egypt. Ptolemy of Megalopolis had been told to hang around in Greece before going on to Rome on his official mission, presumably waiting to see the outcome of the next stage in the war with Carthage; this was behaviour which was only too conspicuous, and his presence was obviously noted. No doubt also rumours and stories came from Alexandria, testifying to Agathokles' problems and to the confusion in the palace.

At some point Antiochos and Philip suggested that they might send help to Egypt to help combat the anti-Ptolemaic rebellion.[57] This cannot have happened before Philip made peace with Aitolia in 205, nor after the events of the end of 203, and Polybios seems to imply that the offer was made to Ptolemy IV, perhaps before that king's death was known. It also seems unlikely that it would have happened before the success of Herwennefer in taking Thebes, which was a major development in the rebellion's progress. But no Ptolemaic government would have agreed to accept such 'help': quite apart from the damage to Ptolemaic prestige which would be involved in receiving such help, there would inevitably be a political price. The offer does indicate clearly that Philip and Antiochos were in contact with each other, and that the situation in Egypt was known to them at least in outline. Agathokles' envoys' attempts to set one king against the other did not succeed.

56 Polybios 15.25.15.
57 Polybios 15.20.1.

This was, however, a moment at which the Ptolemaic regime could have had peace. Pelops' request to Antiochos to continue the peace made with Ptolemy IV met with no response so far as is known, and the Ptolemaic government seems to have rejected the offer to provide assistance against the rebels in the south. But in combination there was the outline of a deal: Seleukid and Antigonid armed assistance against the rebels in return for new peace agreements with Antiochos and Philip. Of course, both of these kings would require to be rewarded, and neither would be easily satisfied—Antiochos would demand Koile Syria, Philip perhaps Karia and Cyrenaica.[58] Agathokles could have haggled, but if he had accepted assistance the rebel regime in the south would have been extinguished sooner than it eventually was. Such a deal was, of course, never politically possible: Agathokles' position in Alexandria was not strong enough for him to accept it, and it is very doubtful if either Philip or Antiochos would have been content to withdraw their troops after suppressing the rebellion, even if, having rescued the Ptolemaic regime, that regime could then survive. Whatever Agathokles decided, the Ptolemaic state was going to be gravely weakened.

Polybios locates the decisive change in international relations exactly here, at the point where the Egyptian revolt was succeeding and the rule of Agathokles was failing.[59] The collapse of the Ptolemaic regime, according to the theory, opened the way for Antiochos III's success, and more distantly for the Roman intervention in Greece and the destruction of Macedonian power. This in turn led to the decisive clash between Rome and Antiochos, to the former's advantage. This is all too simple, however. As will be seen, the Ptolemaic regime was hardly finished, and the Roman defeat of Antiochos barely dented Seleukid power. The Egyptian revolt was only one of a whole series of changes in the international system, spread over a long period, which led to Roman success—and that long period lasted a good century.

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[58] Cyrenaica is one of the places allotted to Philip later in the 'secret pact' with Antiochos; it was also the place where Demetrios the Fair, Philip's great-uncle, had briefly been king; Antiochos could ask for nothing less than Koile Syria.

[59] Polybios 14.12; I am not as convinced as S.M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome*, California 2006, that Polybios' purpose was to highlight the Ptolemaic collapse as a decisive point; it was perhaps easier to deal with the Egyptian situation as a discrete account (as he says) than trying to fit it into a chronological discussion. (This is, of course, the modern approach as well—see *CAH*—which makes it seem convincing.) This certainly highlights the Egyptian condition. The problem with the theory is that all we have is Polybios' introduction to Book 14; the rest of the book has been lost.

The two kings, their first joint initiative rejected, now went further, but again the timing of their later contact may well have been in part a result of events in Alexandria. Agathokles' support in the court and the city and the government gradually evaporated. Questions about the death of Arsinoe were asked, and not answered,[60] which only heightened the general suspicion. Agathokles had no doubt angered plenty of people during the previous two decades when he had been in power alongside Sosibios, and it seems clear he did not possess the political skills which had distinguished Sosibios. Polybios also reports the usual tales of debauchery and lechery, which may or may not be true or exaggerated.[61] Late in 203 the Alexandrian mob boiled over; Agathokles and his family were murdered, brutally and in public. The governor of Pelusion, Tlepolemos, and another son of Sosibios, also Sosibios, took power, though the latter soon vanished.[62]

The Ptolemaic state was therefore now headed by a child, subject to an Egyptian rebellion which appeared to be succeeding, and was racked by *coups* and crises at the governmental centre. Neither Philip nor Antiochos could negotiate with such an unstable regime. They now, probably in 203 when the troubles in Alexandria were at their worst, agreed on a joint campaign to seize from the failing state what they could while it was still possible. In a secret agreement made in the winter of 203/202 they made terms with each other to divide up parts of the Ptolemaic realm between them. The agreement was secret only in the sense that the precise terms were never announced. Polybios claimed that it was disgraceful that two kings should so gang up against a defenceless child, 'whom it was then natural duty to maintain in possession of his realm'.[63] This is a most curious attitude, one which would be laughable if we could be sure that Polybios was serious, and if he really was serious, it casts grave doubts on his political sense and judgment. Polybios was no fan of royalty, and of Ptolemaic loyalty in particular, and his comments were probably only designed, in a simplistic way, to cast doubt on the honour of all kings.[64] Only two years later the sternly anti-monarchic

[60] Polybios 15.25.7–9.
[61] Polybios 15.25.20–24.
[62] Polybios 15.25.34–37.11.
[63] Polybios 15.20.2; also in Livy 31.14.5; App. *Macedonian Wars* 4.1; and Justin 30.2.6; cf. Schmitt, *SVA* III.547.
[64] Polybios' curious attitude has stimulated considerable discussion on this agreement: see Walbank 2.471–473; D. Magie, 'The Agreement between Philip V and Antiochos III for the Partition of the Egyptian Empire', *JRS* 29, 1939, 32–44; R.M. Errington,

republic of Rome went through similar, if more public, contortions in which a small political group railroaded the state into another war against Philip.

There is, in fact, little that is surprising about the agreement except that it was made. Antiochos, by the diplomatic conventions which existed between him and Ptolemy, was fully entitled to attack Egypt. Pelops might remind Antiochos of the terms of the treaty he had made with Ptolemy IV, but by doing so he was only reminding the king—if he needed it—that the treaty no longer applied. Antiochos had always made it clear that he had a claim to Koile Syria and that it was illegally occupied by the Ptolemaic kings; by his lights, and by the international standards of his day, he was only restrained by the oaths sworn in 217; now that the other party was dead, he was free to make another attempt. Philip had made it abundantly clear in the past fifteen and more years that he regarded it as his right to campaign in order to increase his territory, and no treaty he had made limited his demands on Ptolemaic territory—indeed he could raise a similar complaint to that of Antiochos about Ptolemaic territory in Asia, specifically in Karia; also his family had an old interest in Cyrenaica from the time of his grand-uncle Demetrios the Fair, brief husband of Berenike. This was the way hereditary monarchs thought.

The death of Ptolemy IV was crucial to the future history of his kingdom. It led directly to the next Syrian War, which proved to be the decisive one of the whole series. It encouraged the rebellion in the south. It permitted the series of *coups* and murders in Alexandria which damaged the prestige and power of the central government irreparably, and which prevented it from responding with sufficient vigour to the rebellion in the south. The accession of an infant king ensured that these problems would not be resolved easily, and since Ptolemy V was the only member of the royal family left alive, the whole state was in jeopardy.

This, of course, was a Ptolemaic version of what had happened forty years before to their Seleukid rivals: a simultaneous dynastic and governmental crisis, accompanied by the secession of peripheral provinces. The difference was that the Seleukid crisis was only partly self-inflicted (Anti-

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'The Alleged Syro-Macedonian Pact and the Origins of the Second Macedonian War', *Athenaeum* 49, 1971, 336–354; Will, *Hist. Pol.*, Vol. II, 114–118; Gruen, *The Hellenistic World*, 387–388; Ma, *Antiochos III*, 74–82; B. Dreyer, 'Der "Raubvertrag" des jahres 203 / 2 v. Chr.: das inschriftenfragment von Bargylia und der Brief von Amyzon', *Ep. Anat.*, 34, 2002, 119–138.

ochos II's second marriage to Berenike, and Antiochos Hierax's personal ambition to be king). The main damage was done by the Ptolemaic invasion of Syria. In Egypt it was wholly self-inflicted, by the rebellion of the native population against the overweening power and greed of the fiscal state, and by the semi-abdication of Ptolemy IV from the business of government, which allowed Sosibios to emerge as the real ruler. It was only after this combination of internal problems and crises had been continuing for several years that external war came to complete the destruction of the state's imperial pretensions.

The period between 207, the outbreak of the rebellion, and 202, the beginning of the Fifth Syrian War, was therefore the period when the Ptolemaic state began its collapse. It was also the time when Antiochos III, with greatly increased prestige derived from his expedition to the east and his new control over Asia Minor, and his own much enhanced experience and personal confidence, returned to the west. This was the decisive reversal in international affairs in general, and in the relations of power between the Seleukid and Ptolemaic states in particular: as the Ptolemaic state endured its great crisis, the Seleukid state was at its most powerful, united, and confident.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# THE FIFTH WAR, THE TRIUMPH OF ANTIOCHOS III

In the discussions between Antiochos and Philip over their plans for the Ptolemaic lands, one land in particular was allocated to Antiochos. We can say this without even having evidence of the terms of the agreement. The claim of the king and his ancestors to all Syria had been maintained for century and had been paid for in the blood of Antiochos' soldiers. He would not need to wait for any action by Philip—and indeed the agreement was not in any real sense an alliance. And there could be only one place he would mount an attack: Syria.

The allocation of territories is not mentioned by Polybios, who is the most immediate source (though he lived and wrote half a century later). It is in fact unlikely that any division was announced, for it was, after all, a secret agreement, but it appears that the Rhodians made some allegations as to the contents of the agreement, probably to alert the Romans. It was later claimed that Rome was alarmed and ordered Antiochos to keep away from Egypt,[1] but such a procedure was not part of the diplomatic process at the time, and Antiochos would have ignored it had it been made—and anyway, he was not concerned to attack Egypt itself, only Syria. There were, however, potential conflicts of interest in the partition. Antiochos claimed not just Syria, but also Thrace (where three of his relations had campaigned) and all Asia Minor, which presumably included Karia, where both Philip and Rhodes had interests and ambitions. Philip, who moved as soon as he knew that the Ptolemaic government had its attention fixed on Syria, attacked a series of cities in Thrace and on the Hellespont, as well as in Karia, and all these places could be claimed by Antiochos.

For the moment, however, neither was concerned about possible future conflicts between them. The agreement was made in the winter of 203/202,[2] and evidently preceded any hostilities. No doubt one of the purposes of the agreement was to ensure that the two kings knew more or less what the other was going to do. If Philip mentioned his intention

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1 Justin 30.3.3.
2 Polybios 15.20.1.

to campaign in Thrace, Antiochos kept quiet about his own ambitions there. And if he did not comment, Philip no doubt took this as a tacit resignation of Antiochos' claims to him.

The war opened with Antiochos' attack on Koile Syria in the spring of 202.[3] He had already campaigned three times through the Ptolemaic provinces there and he understood the political and military geography well enough. This time he would take a different route.

The main Seleukid military base in Syria was at Apameia, one of the four great cities founded by Seleukos I to control Syria north of the Ptolemaic boundary at the Eleutheros River. Apameia sits on a flat plateau with the Orontes River flowing past below it on its southern and western sides. To the west was the marshland of the Ghab and then the Bargylos Mountains; to the east the steppeland insensibly changes to desert as one moves eastwards. It was a city the size of Antioch, well fortified, where the kings had their elephant park. South of the city, along the course of the Orontes River, there were a series of smaller places—Larissa, Arethusa, Laodikeia-ad-Libanum—all fortified, and placed to control the route along the river which led into the northern part of the Bekaa valley.

This fortified zone was complemented on the west by the territory held by the city of Arados, which stretched north along the coast for fifty kilometres or more, and inland along the north bank of the Eleutheros for about twenty kilometres. The coastal route to the north, between the Bargylos and the sea, was dotted with the Aradian towns of the city's *peraia*—Marathos, Balanaia, Gabala—and then reached another of Seleukos' great fortified cities, Laodikeia-on-the-Sea. This made the route useless for an invasion from the south, for the invading army would be entering a long narrow route between the sea and the mountains, blocked at the north by Laodikeia, and crossing the Bargylos would only lead the army into the Ghab marshes. An army would thus be vulnerable to attack by light forces from the mountains, and by landings from the sea from ships based in Arados and Laodikeia. Seleukos had in fact produced a well-ordered fortified zone, which had served its defensive purposes very well in 221–217. It is noticeable that the only successful invasion of North

[3] Or so we may suppose. The sources for this war are very poor (which must be the explanation for the minimal modern accounts: Will, *Hist. Pol.*, 2.118–120; occasional references in *CAH* VIII.2, for example). For a war which lasted 6 or 7 years between two of the great powers of the Mediterranean world, this seems extraordinary.

Syria by Ptolemaic forces had ignored the land route. This had been in 246 when Ptolemy III and his forces were welcomed into Seleukeia and Arados and Antioch in the confusion following the death of Antiochos II.

South of this Seleukid defensive zone, and south of the Eleutheros valley, the Ptolemies had left a long stretch of inland territory virtually undefended, as Antiochos had found in 219 and 218, clearly with the intention of gaining an early warning of an invasion. The coast was lined, of course, with the Phoenician towns and cities, and Antiochos knew full well that this was a difficult route for an invasion if the cities were defended—Sidon in particular had never fallen to him in three campaigns—but 218 had shown that Sidon (and Tyre this time) were the main blocks along the route, which was even more difficult than the route along the Aradian *peraia*. Inland he had also marched up the Orontes valley (here, the Bekaa valley), but this was blocked by the Ptolemaic fortified zone which was anchored in the towns of Gerrha and Brochoi. The long march from Apameia to these lines—200 kilometres in a straight line—would take ten days at least, and this would give the Ptolemaic forces plenty of warning.

Antiochos had managed to get through these obstacles in the Fourth War, but only by evading the fortified zone and bypassing Sidon. This had been cleverly done, mainly thanks to the defection of Theodotos, which had opened the way, but once Antiochos was defeated at Raphia these untaken places became serious threats in his rear. Their presence had been one of the major factors in compelling him to retreat all the way back to the Eleutheros. It was not worth taking these places for themselves (though Sidon was an important city), since by laying siege to them he would use up much on his army and provide the Ptolemaic army with the opportunity to attack him, whereas the really important target was Palestine. If Antiochos could conquer and hold Palestine, these cities were isolated and would fall eventually. But to reach Palestine he would need to have secure communications back to Syria, and this meant that he would have to evade the fortified area even more decisively than before.

This factor drew attention to Damascus, which had been ignored in Antiochos' earlier campaigns. The city lies east of the Antilebanon Mountains, in a great oasis called the Ghuta, which is watered by rivers from the Bekaa. An immensely ancient place, its huge oasis made it virtually self-sufficient. It had not figured at all in the events of the previous century. Access to the area was mainly by way of the gorge of the Barada River out of the Bekaa, but for Antiochos that route was blocked

by the Gerrha-Brochoi lines, which would be on his flank. But the Ghuta did communicate with Palestine, by way of roads over the Golan Heights, which led to crossings of the Jordan both north and south of the Sea of Galilee. A longer route led due south by way of the old desert route road into the lands east of the Jordan where he had campaigned before. He could then cross the Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, at one or more of several crossing points. These routes from Damascus southwards were relatively easy, at least as far as the Jordan crossings; the problem therefore was how to reach Damascus. If the city and its oasis could be captured Antiochos' supply difficulties would be much eased, his communication difficulties would be very much lessened, and the Ptolemaic fortified zone decisively bypassed.

There was another route to Damascus from the north, avoiding the Bekaa, but it was one which was impossible for a fully-equipped army of heavily armed infantry, who would move too slowly. This is the desert road along the eastern foot of the Antilebanon, between the mountains and the desert. It is a dry and dusty route, whose difficulties are mitigated only in the spring when areas of the desert bloom, but even then it was a route to be used only by a fast-moving small force. In the spring it was, however, marginally less difficult to traverse than at any other time.[4]

This was something Antiochos could do. He now had a well-experienced, flexible, professional army under his command, which had in the past ten years successfully accomplished a wide variety of military tasks. There were light infantry units, such as those he had used across the Lebanese mountains in 219, the heavy infantry of the phalanx, and heavy cavalry of the usual types, and elephants. He had recruited specialized groups wherever he found them effective and later even had a chariot corps. His army was capable of great set-piece battles, mountain campaigns, and could march through deserts, hills and plains.[5] Antiochos himself was by now the most experienced commander east of Italy, and had at his command a set of experienced, capable, and loyal commanders. His regular army was about 35,000 strong, and it could be reinforced to double that number from the militia when needed. In his 36-year reign, he called that militia out only three or four times; the regu-

[4] This, given that the Bekaa valley is now foreign territory, is the major strategic route of the Republic of Syria between Damascus and the north and is now a well-paved and busy highway. But it is still dry, even in spring, and still virtually unpopulated.

[5] B. Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army*, Cambridge 1976, part 1.

lar professional army was his usual instrument. Antiochos himself specialised in the command of the cavalry, which he normally led in battle, and this was exactly the force required for the attempt on Damascus.

The Ptolemaic government was not unmindful of the possibility of an attack on the city, and had posted a strong garrison there, commanded by an officer called Dinon. The distance from Antiochos' military base at Apameia and the likely strong defence he would encounter meant that Antiochos could not afford a siege, but had to take the city swiftly, and this required surprise. The opportunity came with a local festival, in which Dinon and his garrison took part. While the Ptolemaic forces were thus distracted, Antiochos equipped his cavalrymen with 'four days provision of raw flour', marched swiftly along the desert route east of Antilebanon, and arrived while the festival was on. He was also in advance of the news of his march. 'By a vigorous attack [he] surprised, and took' the city.[6]

Damascus, with its difficult connections to other places, is a natural fortress.[7] Once he held the city, Antiochos had access to a major source of supplies, and controlled its communications, not only by his route-of-march east of the Antilebanon, but also onwards, south into Palestine and trans-Jordan. By occupying the Barada gorge, he was able to block any Ptolemaic counterattack from the Bekaa positions, and he could open easier communications by way of the northern part of that valley to his base in the north. This permitted him to march his vulnerable infantry along the Bekaa and thence into the Ghuta. In fact, it is likely that his infantry began the march first in order to fix the attention of the Ptolemaic forces in the Bekaa and along the coast road, and so conceal the movement of the cavalry on the eastern route, though this is only a guess. Once the Ghuta and the Barada gorge were occupied, the Ptolemaic forces at the Gerrha-Brochoi lines were not strong enough to mount an attack on the stronger Seleukid forces who were marching south through the Bekaa, and they could not be reinforced once the fighting had moved on into Palestine. Once again Antiochos had evaded and outflanked the Ptolemaic defensive system.

The campaign which followed is much less well recorded (for us) than the earlier campaigns in Palestine in the previous war, for Polybios'

[6] The episode here is in Polyainos 4.15, ascribed to 'Antiochos son of Seleukos'. This might be Antiochos I or III, and is usually ascribed to the former. It is more likely to be the latter, who was as capable militarily and more successful. The origin of Polyainos' anecdote is unknown, but Polybios is the most probable source.

[7] For a useful history of the city, see R. Burns, *Damascus*, London 2007.

account has been reduced to a few fragments. It does seem that Antiochos was able to march more or less unhindered through Palestine, either because he was able to take all the towns and cities he approached, or because he ignored and bypassed any which resisted. The first part of the campaign eventually centred on Gaza, which was, as ever, the key to controlling Palestine. The Ptolemaic garrison fought back, but Antiochos had to take the city if he was going to be able to hold his conquests. In Egyptian hands Gaza was an open door; in Antiochos' control, Ptolemy's entry into Palestine was blocked. The siege took some time, which Polybios attributes to the valour of the citizens, but it was obviously well garrisoned as well. The current first minister in Alexandria, Tlepolemos, had been governor of Pelusion, Gaza's counterpart on the Egyptian side; he will have fully appreciated Gaza's importance. The city fell to Antiochos during the campaigning season of 201, allowing him to block Ptolemaic attacks out of Egypt while clearing out the last Ptolemaic holdouts in the rest of Koile Syria.[8]

This was evidently a different strategy than Antiochos' first invasion in 219. Then he had painstakingly conquered Palestine from the north to the east and then to the south. Now he appears to have marched directly to Gaza, ignoring the towns and cities on the way, in order to seize that city first. He will then have mopped up those cities which were still held by Ptolemy's forces later. It seems likely—none of this appears in any of the surviving evidence—that many will have capitulated without much resistance, though some—Sidon, the Gerrha-Brochoi lines, Joppa—certainly held out. The result was that the major part of the Palestinian part of Koile Syria fell without trouble into Antiochos' control.

The reasons for the rapid collapse of the Ptolemaic position in Palestine are probably two. The trouble in southern Egypt had no doubt drawn much of the embodied Ptolemaic forces in that direction, therefore thinning out the defences in Palestine, though it must be said that the Ptolemaic government had plenty of warning of Antiochos' attack; the rapid seizure of Damascus was surely a surprise; the attack on Gaza rather than the systematic conquest of Palestine was perhaps another surprise, but by the time Gaza fell the war had been on for well over a year. Just as decisive was the defection to Antiochos of the governor of Koile Syria, Ptolemaios

[8] Polybios 16.22a. The basic study of the Palestinian part of the war is M. Holleaux, 'La Chronologie de la Cinquième Guerre de Syrie', *Klio* 8, 1908, 267–281, but he largely ignores events in Asia Minor, dating the end of the war to 198, whereas it continued until 195.

son of Thraseas. He could do this in the full knowledge that Antiochos welcomed such defectors, as had happened in 219 with Theodotos and Panaitolos (and their successor Nikolaos, who is noted as one of Antiochos' commanders in the east, as is Lagoras the Cretan, one of Ptolemy's commanders at the Porphyrion fight.[9]

Ptolemaios' defection was a much more serious matter even than that of Theodotos. Theodotos, after all, was only a mercenary, even if a general. Ptolemaios came from a family, originally from Aspendos in Pamphylia, which had been prominent in the Ptolemaic service for four generations. The first known family member, Apollonios, came to Egypt from Aspendos as a soldier or a clerk or perhaps a cleruch; his son Aitos was governor of the Ptolemaic positions in Kilikia for a time and was instrumental in founding the new city of Arsinoe, near Nagidos in Rough Kilikia; Aitos' son, Thraseas, was governor of Kilikia also and for a time governor of Cyprus.[10] This is an impressive family career, built on rewarded service to the dynasty over a period of well over half a century. Thraseas' son Ptolemaios had fought at Raphia, in command of part of the phalanx,[11] and by 202 he was governor of at least part of the Ptolemaic lands in Syria.[12] His defection, which seems to have taken place in 202 or perhaps 201, was a serious matter, first because if a man of such a lineage and prominence defected many others must be just as strongly alienated, and second, by timing his move when he did, he no doubt assisted in the transfer of all Palestine into Antiochos' hands—the lesson of Theodotos once again. It may well have been Ptolemaios' work which allowed Antiochos to march all the way to Gaza in the campaign of 201. Disillusionment with the Ptolemaic government probably went much deeper than a single disappointed governor: at least one group, the Jews in Jerusalem, were in receipt of a letter from Antiochos acknowledging their help, through Ptolemaios, in the campaign.[13]

The conquest of Gaza ended the campaign of 201, and Antiochos, no doubt leaving garrisons in the main centres in the conquered country, sent his army into winter quarters. Meanwhile Antiochos' new friend

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[9] Polybios 10.29.6.

[10] C.P. Jones, and C. Habicht, 'A Hellenistic Inscription from Arsinoe in Cilicia', *Phoenix* 43, 1989, 317–346.

[11] Polybios 5.65.3.

[12] D. Gera, 'Ptolemy son of Thraseas and the Fifth Syrian War', *Ancient Society* 18, 1987, 63–73.

[13] Josephus *AJ*, 138–144.

Philip V had had a much more difficult task. He campaigned in 202 along the Straits, capturing or gaining control of Lysimacheia, Kalchedon, Kios, and Perinthos.[14] This was not a bad bag of conquests, for collectively these cities gave him potential control of the great seaway, but when he extended Macedonian power in this region he alerted and alarmed those cities whose commerce went through the Straits. Rhodes protested. Aitolia, recently Rome's ally in the war with Philip, was also worried and appealed to Rome again. Philip also took Thasos city and island on his way home.[15] He had gained some territory and partial control over a major strategic position, but at the cost of rousing a lot of influential enemies to full and quivering attention. What he had not done was attack any Ptolemaic possessions. The two kings may well have agreed to divide the Ptolemaic empire between them, but they were now fighting two completely separate wars. It may also be noted that Lysimacheia at least was one of those places to which Antiochos had an inherited claim. It may be that Philip's purpose was less to capture Ptolemaic territories than to gain a strategic position from which he could later face and defy Antiochos when the Ptolemaic war ended.[16]

In the spring of 201, while Antiochos was invading Palestine, Philip mounted a naval expedition which was clearly designed to gain control over the Aegean. A cruise through the Kyklades, which had gravitated into the Rhodian sphere earlier, brought submissions from several islands.[17] He occupied the Ptolemaic naval base at Samos, 'borrowed' some ships[18] and went on to attempt to recover his family's former possessions in Karia. A Rhodian fleet tried to block his way but was defeated and Philip gained control of Miletos, which at least had been Ptolemaic until then.[19] Once again his successes—and his brutal methods—were even more successful at rousing opposition than in achieving conquests. Attalos of Pergamon, Chios, Byzantion, and others, now joined Rhodes in moving to stop him, and in a naval battle against the combined Attalid

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[14] Polybios 15.21.9–23. 10.

[15] Polybios 15.24.1–3; F.M. Walbank, *Philip V of Macedon*, Oxford 1940, 114–116.

[16] Neither Walbank (*Philip V*) nor Will (*Hist. Pol.* Vol. 2) considers this aspect, which to be sure is not noted in any ancient source, but it is worth bearing in mind that, until the 'Secret Pact', relations between Seleukids and Antigonids had not been good for some time. Later events also suggest that Philip and Antiochos were by no means allies, or even friends, except for this one case of plundering Ptolemy.

[17] Livy 31.15.8 and 31.4

[18] App., *Macedonian Wars*, 4.1; Polybios 3.2.8; 14.24 and 9.7.6; Livy 31.31.4.

[19] Polybios 16.15.1–8.

and Rhodian fleets he lost half of his fleet and thousands of his men.[20] He pushed on into Karia, but was blockaded in the small town of Bargylia during the winter of 201/200.[21] He fed his men by extorting supplies from the nearby cities and by plundering the countryside. Here, as once before, he also received supplies sent by Zeuxis, Antiochos' governor of Asia Minor.[22] That Zeuxis helped him is the full extent of the cooperation of Philip and Antiochos, and Zeuxis' contribution was just about as minimal and reluctant as everyone else's.

This was, so far as Philip was concerned, the only practical result of his agreement with Antiochos. The agreement had been to divide up Ptolemy's possessions, and Philip had largely failed to make any moves against those which he had claimed, and those he had taken were also, often, those which Antiochos himself could lay claim to. Antiochos had no obligation to assist Philip in conquering territories from Ptolemy; in the event Zeuxis' supplies could be construed as either bribing Philip to go away or submitting to extortion, which was the same reaction as almost everybody else in the area.

While Philip was trapped in Bargylia the news of the agreement to partition the Ptolemaic lands was beginning to become known. Since it was secret, and the terms were only vaguely known, if at all, exaggeration and invention were widespread. Rhodes and Attalos both now appealed to Rome for help and protection, adding their voices to that of the Aitolians, earlier; and another appeal had come from the government in Alexandria, where Tlepolemos was still in charge.[23]

The agreement between Antiochos and Philip cannot then be characterized as an actual alliance, in which the two undertook to assist each other in the war, unless Philip is to be convicted of instant faithlessness (which his Greek neighbours would certainly believe of him). The agreement did, however, in the exaggerated and distorted version propagated by Rhodes and Attalos, have its effect on Rome, where the Republic eventually declared war on Philip, though for reasons of its own which had little or nothing to do with his agreement with Antiochos and his recent conquests. From Rome's point of view, this was mainly revenge for Philip's conduct during the war with Carthage; the Roman war aim was essentially to ensure the threat of Macedonian hostility was removed.

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20 Polybios 16.2.1–9.5.
21 Polybios 16.24.1.
22 Polybios 16.1.8–9 and 24.6.
23 Egyptian appeal: Justin 30.2.8.

Threatened by a Roman ultimatum Philip decided it had no relevance to the actions he was currently undertaking, and so he ignored it, and, at last, began a campaign against those Ptolemaic possessions within his reach.[24]

So during 202 Antiochos had conquered Damascus, and Philip campaigned along the Straits; in 201 Antiochos conquered much of Koile Syria as far as Gaza, but not Phoenicia, and there may well have been parts of Palestine still under Ptolemaic control, and Philip meanwhile had collected a few Ptolemaic possessions around the Aegean, but neither he nor the Ptolemaic government regarded themselves at war with each other. The intervention of Rome against Macedon came next year for very different reasons, and the absence of a military alliance between Philip and Antiochos meant that Antiochos could ignore events in Greece, and even ignore for the present Philip's encroachment on his preserves, both in the Straits and in Karia.[25] He was still deeply involved in Koile Syria. His capture of Gaza had made it more difficult for the Ptolemaic forces to attack him, but the patchy nature of his control of Koile Syria as a whole made it certain that fighting would continue next year, and that there would be a Ptolemaic counter-attack.

Philip escaped from Bargylia in the early part of 200, and soon began to attack the Ptolemaic possessions, though he first antagonized Athens even further. In the summer he marched east and captured several of the Ptolemaic towns along the Straits: Ainos, Maroneia, Sestos, Abydos, and others.[26] In Egypt, meanwhile, the conquest of Syria and the siege of Gaza in 201 produced another *coup*: Tlepolemos, accused, as usual, of debauchery, was removed (his personal fate is unknown) and a former associate of Agathokles called Aristomenes, emerged as regent.[27]

The unpreparedness of the Ptolemaic government had been shown by the loss of Koile Syria, and was all the more reprehensible since all the successive ministers had clearly apprehended the threat from Antiochos ever since the death of Philopator. The defection of Ptolemaios son of Thraseas had exacerbated the situation but did not cause it, though no doubt much of the blame was heaped on him. Tleopolemos had reacted in the same way as Sosibios had in 219, by financing the recruitment

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[24] Walbank, *Philip V*, 130–131.

[25] One of Philip's minions in Karia was Olympichos, by this time more or less confined to the city of Alinda, who had originally been the Seleukid governor in the area in the 240s.

[26] Livy 31.16.4–6; Polybios 16.29.3.

[27] *Pros. Ptol.*, 19, 14592.

of reinforcements for the army. Skopas was sent to Greece on another recruiting drive, and was particularly successful in recruiting his fellow Aitolians.[28] This produced an army in Egypt by the winter of 201. Skopas was given the task of the reconquest of Palestine, and as a surprise move he undertook a winter campaign, while Antiochos' forces were in winter quarters. The Ptolemaic army had not been involved in a major campaign in the previous year, and did not need the break to rest and refit.

Another traditional measure by the Ptolemaic government in the face of invasion was to bring to Egypt many of the soldiers in garrison in the scattered posts of the empire; this may be one reason Philip was able next year to overrun the posts along the Straits, in which case we can say that the agreement between Philip and Antiochos was at last proving successful in facilitating conquests. The Ptolemaic government was thus faced by war in Thrace and the Aegean, in Koile Syria and in southern Egypt; partly by using control of the sea, it was possible to transfer troops from Greece (Skopas' recruits) and the Straits to Egypt; within Egypt the Nile performed the same function.

The Ptolemaic return to Koile Syria early in 200 was perhaps assisted by the death at Thebes of the rebel Pharaoh Herwennefer. He was succeeded during 201/200 (the precise date is not known) by another Egyptian, Ankhwennefer, who may or may not have been related to him.[29] The change of king would certainly adversely affect any campaigning they might undertake, and so reduce pressure on the Alexandrian government. The Theban government was also affected by the intrusion of the Meroitic power from the south. The kingdom based at Meroe on the upper Nile had long been at odds with the Ptolemies, and its king now took advantage of the general confusion to extend his power northwards along the river, particularly along the stretch called Dodekaschoenos, south of Syene and Elephantine. This pressure on the rebel regime allowed Ptolemaic troops to make some progress in the next year or two—but it also meant that these Ptolemaic troops could not take

[28] Polybios 15.25.16; Livy 31.48.

[29] Herwennefer's year 6 was also Ankhwennefer's Year 1, which is 201/200, but the exact date of the change is unknown. One might assume a period of confusion at the change of king, which would certainly reduce the pressure on the Ptolemaic forces; K. Vandorpe, 'The Chronology of the Reigns of Hurganophor and Chaonnophris', *Chronique d'Egypte* 61, 1986, 294–302; Viesse, 11–18, lists the chronological documentation; B.C. McGing, 'Revolt Egyptian Style: Internal Opposition to Ptolemaic Rule', *AfP* 43, 1997, 273–314 at 284.

part in the fighting in Syria which was going on at the same time, so it is unlikely that the change of pharaoh allowed Ptolemaic forces to be withdrawn,[30] though they would perhaps not have to be reinforced.

The rebelliousness of the Egyptians, however, was spreading. By 197, and probably starting sometime earlier, there was rebel activity in the Delta, referred to rather obliquely in the Rosetta Stone as 'Lykopolis in the Busirite nome having been seized ... by impious means'. The inscription is dated 196, so the siege of the town was recent, and dated probably to 197. The conflict clearly took some time, and it was only the end of this phase of the fighting which is recorded on the stone. The revolt there had clearly continued for several years.[31] The connection between this and the southern rebellion is not documented, but presumably one did exist. It could only have been yet another distraction for the regency government in Alexandria.

Skopas' winter attack reconquered Palestine, which fell as quickly to him as it had to Antiochos; no doubt the Palestinians kept their heads down in the crisis. Antiochos' army had been largely withdrawn, perhaps because the fighting and confusion within Egypt persuaded the king that any early Ptolemaic return was out of the question. But it also seems likely that, since he had once again not yet taken control of the Ptolemaic Lebanese fortresses, he was not willing to leave his army separated from his home territories by untaken cities. The troops who did remain were not numerous enough to resist the reconquest. Skopas was therefore able to campaign as far as northern Palestine before Antiochos and his army arrived to renew the contest.

Little is known of Skopas' campaign, but a note in Josephos quoted from Polybios indicates that he had to reconquer Jerusalem.[32] That is to say, the Jews of the Judaean Hills were content to stay with Antiochos, and from Josephus' words it seems that they resisted the Ptolemaic return. No doubt there was a Seleukid governor in the city as well. Other communities may have done the same. Antiochos will certainly have left

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[30] L. Torok, 'To the History of the Dodekaschoenos between ca. 250 BC and 298 AD', *ZAS* 107, 1980, 71–86; A. Farid, 'The Stela of Adikhalamani found at Philae', *Mitteilungen des Deutsches Archaologische Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 34, 1978, 53–56, suggests that the Nubian king (Adikhalamani) was supporting the Ptolemies in his intrusion northwards; if so, this could have been a result of Ptolemaic diplomacy; A.D. Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush*, London 1996, 66–67, makes several suggestions, but the evidence is really too weak for conclusions to be drawn.

[31] Austin 283, lines 22–24.

[32] Polybios 16.39.1; Jos., *AJ* 12.3.3; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 45–46.

a garrison in Gaza, and if that was large, Skopas will have found that his communications back to Egypt were in constant danger of interruption. It may be, of course, that he did not mind, but Antiochos, in much the same situation with the Phoenician cities still under Ptolemaic control, did make sure he maintained contact with his base. These considerations therefore suggest that Skopas had to spend much of the first half of the year re-establishing Ptolemaic control throughout the region. He will have had at least a month, and probably longer, to do so while Antiochos recalled his forces and marched south.

Skopas had a large and well-equipped army; Antiochos came south with an even bigger army than at Raphia, larger in numbers than Skopas', though it is impossible to produce estimates of the size of either army.[33] Skopas had recruited many more mercenaries from Greece quite recently, but he was unable to supplement his Greco-Egyptian forces by recruiting an Egyptian native phalanx, and there was a substantial Ptolemaic force busy still in Egypt. Antiochos, on the other hand, had a bigger and more firmly governed kingdom than before, and was clearly able to call up the full levy of his kingdom. This also implies that the time spent by Skopas in marching from Egypt and in reoccupying Palestine was used by Antiochos not merely to march his army south (again by way of Damascus, for the battle took place on the road leading southeast from that city), but also to have called up his reserve forces. The battle of Panion is nowhere precisely dated, but it seems to have happened in the second half of 200. Skopas began his campaign in the winter (that is, between November and March), so Antiochos will have had six months to gather his army and march south, during which time Skopas was busy ejecting Antiochos' garrisons and re-imposing Ptolemaic control.

We must assume, despite the lack of any figures, that the Seleukid army numbered more than 70,000 men (it had been about 68,000 at Raphia), while the Ptolemaic army was perhaps 10,000 men fewer. Any larger discrepancy would have discouraged Skopas from fighting a battle at all. On the other hand, by not fighting Skopas would certainly lose the war; no doubt he had been told to fight or die. The Ptolemaic government, now under Aristomenes, who had only been in power a few months, had no choice but to see that he fought a full-scale battle.[34]

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[33] Bar-Kochva, *Seleucid Army*, ch. 12, makes no attempt to do so.

[34] The only source for the battle is Polybios 16.18.1–19.11, but what remains is his criticism of another historian, Zeno of Rhodes, so, as Bar-Kochva remarks 'we have at our disposal only those details which Polybios found to be unlikely' (*Seleucid Army* 146);

Skopas did his best. He intercepted Antiochos' army in the far north of Palestine, just south of Mount Hermon, and so in the mountainous country which the Seleukid army had reached, presumably by marching from Damascus. Rough country was not good for phalanx warfare, which required a fairly level plain to allow the phalanx to deploy and operate. The two armies did in fact find a more or less suitable plain to deploy in, near the site of the later city of Panias, from which, and from a nearby shrine to the god Pan, the battle is called Panion.

The field of battle was divided by a stream, and two prominent hills overlooked it. Antiochos, coming from the direction of Damascus, placed the main part of his phalanx in the northern part of the plain, flanked by his cavalry unit of cataphracts, mailed horsemen, heavily armed, who occupied the hill to the north. (This was a new unit, recruited it seems during Antiochos' eastern campaign, one of several innovations of Antiochos as a result of his varied experience of warfare.) The king himself was in overall command, and his son, Antiochos the Younger, commanded the cataphracts, or at least was present with them. The smaller section of the phalanx was stationed south of the stream, with another unit of cavalry flanking it on another hill even further south. Facing the main force of phalangites was the Ptolemaic phalanx—that is, the troops under the direct authority of the Ptolemaic government, troops domiciled in Egypt—flanked by the Ptolemaic cavalry; south of the stream Skopas deployed the Aitolian mercenaries he had himself recruited, and the Aitolian cavalry. He had fewer elephants than Antiochos, and placed them in front of the Ptolemaic phalanx, to face part of the Seleukid elephant corps—it was Africans against Indians again. The remainder of the Seleukid beasts were placed behind the smaller phalanx on the south. This deployment was superficially conventional, but actually was rather subtle on both sides, as the fighting would show.

In the north the Seleukid Indian elephants beat the Ptolemaic Africans once again, but the decisive move on that side was the charge of the Seleukid cataphracts, who drove off the Ptolemaic cavalry and then turned on the Ptolemaic phalanx, which was also engaged with the Seleukid phalanx in front; this turned into a major killing match, and the Ptolemaic phalanx was steadily worn down. On the south the Aitolians justified their fighting reputation: their cavalry was victorious over the

cf. also Walbank 2.523. It was clearly a complicated battle, and ancient accounts were necessarily difficult. I follow here Bar Kochva's reconstruction in his chapter 12.

Seleukid horse on that wing, and the Aitolian foot, who were lighter armed and more mobile than the hoplites of the phalanx, broke up the Seleukid force. But then both Aitolian groups came up against the solid wall of elephants, who were as usual interspersed with archers and other light forces. The Aitolians' horses, unused to facing elephants, were frightened off, and the foot could not penetrate the elephant wall, which was no doubt now reinforced by the surviving hoplites from the defeated phalanx.

This is where the layout of the battlefield was crucial, and the preliminary dispositions potentially vital. The southern part of the field, where the fight between the Aitolians and the smaller section of this Seleukid phalanx took place, was much less important than the northern. The Aitolians would eventually go home, victorious or not. The Ptolemaic phalanx, on the other hand, was not merely the largest Ptolemaic unit on the battlefield, it was also the vital mainstay of the Ptolemaic government. Its destruction would make it impossible for the Ptolemaic government to continue the war. Hence Antiochos' dispositions, which were evident directed at destroying that phalanx; the use of the elephants to block the Aitolians, whose victory on the south was the one hope Skopas had of winning once his main phalanx was surrounded, was the cleverest move of all, since their line prevented the Aitolians from intervening in the other part of the battlefield. Note also that Antiochos was able this time to control his cavalry much more effectively than at Raphia.

On the north, therefore, the Seleukid attack was overwhelmingly successful and was in the process of destroying the Ptolemaic phalanx beyond recovery. On the south the Aitolians had been tactically successful, but were then held to a draw by the elephants, and prevented from intervening in the northern fight. Skopas, in command but not directly involved—just as King Antiochos this time kept himself out of the detailed fighting—saw that the only part of the army which was likely to survive was the Aitolians'. He left the Ptolemaic phalanx to be destroyed and rode across to the Aitolians; there he withdrew the whole unit, conducting a well-managed retreat away from the battle site. (That he rescued his own people is understandable, but it did nothing to endear him to the government in Alexandria, who found their own people had the heaviest casualties.) The Seleukid forces meanwhile were fully engaged in the fighting on the northern side, while those on the south were too damaged to pursue. Letting the Aitolians go allowed Antiochos to finish off the phalanx, and helped to sow doubts of Skopas' loyalty in Alexandrian

minds. The destruction of the Ptolemaic phalanx would substantially reduce the power and authority of the Ptolemaic government, which would find it still more difficult to deal with the Egyptian insurgents.

Several overall conclusions about the battle can be reached, despite the extremely awkward source material. The Seleukid army was clearly a much more flexible and competent force than it had been at Raphia, and Antiochos had added the formidable cataphracts to his armoury. The deployment of the elephants was cleverly done, and the use of them as a cavalry-deterring wall shows that Antiochos had studied his family's military history, for this was a new version of the similar deployment of the elephants by Seleukos I at Ipsos a century before. Antiochos showed careful political judgment in concentrating on the Ptolemaic phalanx, and, in effect, letting the Aitolians get away; less than a decade later he was to be allied to the Aitolian League, an alliance which will scarcely have been possible if he had massacred the mercenaries. The two generals for once held themselves out of the fighting in order to direct the overall battle—neither had any need to prove their fighting skills to their troops by this time, and the complications of the deployment on both sides required a different kind of generalship than that at Raphia, where both kings were in the middle of things. The well-disciplined cataphracts were not carried away with their charge, but, under the apparent command of Antiochos the Younger, who was only twenty years old or less, rallied from the defeat of the Ptolemaic cavalry and were brought back to do their real job, which was to attack the enemy phalanx from the rear and flank. Skopas similarly was able to pull out his Aitolians because he had not been directly involved in the fighting. Both men, of course, could do this only because they were well known to have fought valiantly in the ranks in the past. But for generals to direct rather than participate was a distinct advance in methods of warfare, and portended more intelligent battle conduct in the future.

This was a truly decisive battle, far more so than Raphia, which simply restored Koile Syria to the Ptolemies. The destruction of the Ptolemaic phalanx rendered the Ptolemaic government powerless to go on contesting the possession of Koile Syria, which from now on was Seleukid. The loss of soldiers also lengthened the existence of the rebel Egyptian regime, and restricted the ability of the Ptolemaic regime in Alexandria to contest the conquest of their distant possessions by Philip and later by Antiochos.

Skopas brought the Aitolian contingent, 10,000 strong, in a careful retreat to refuge in Sidon. Antiochos cleared up the battlefield and moved south to reoccupy 'Samaria, Gadara, and Abila', which implies that Ptole-

maic authority in northern Palestine had been restored in Skopas' earlier march,[35] and then took part of his army to besiege Sidon.[36] Much of Antiochos' army was probably dismissed after the battle, for he would not now need his whole available force to finish things off. Skopas' Aitolians were still in the field but were not strong enough to fight an open conflict with Antiochos' army. Antiochos could retain his main professional force—which was about 35,000 strong usually—and the rest, the reservists who were called up only for the great encounters like Raphia and this battle, were sent back to their homes, no doubt with the king's thanks, a reward, and rightly proud of what they had done.

The siege of Sidon was more a blockade than an active assault, and only part of Antiochos' army would be required. Half of his force could then be used to establish Seleukid government in the conquered territory: we have a note that Jerusalem was recovered.[37] In all this Ptolemaios son of Thraseas was particularly useful. He was reappointed as governor of Seleukid Koile Syria, and no doubt he was able to get the Ptolemaic governing system operating again quickly. It was presumably in this period that any other unconquered Ptolemaic detachments were persuaded to give up the fight. This would include any in the Ptolemaic cities, such as Jerusalem and possibly Gaza, which had been retaken by Skopas, and, at last, the garrisons of Gerrha and Brochoi.

No mention is made in the thin sources of any of the Phoenician cities apart from Sidon, and the assumption must be that they surrendered to Antiochos while the siege of Sidon continued. By using the approach through Damascus in 202, possibly in 201, and again in 200 Antiochos had been able to ignore them throughout the war until then. Sidon held out through the winter of 200 / 199. The government in Alexandria made serious attempts to relieve the siege, clearly feeling that not was all yet lost. Little is known of these attempts beyond the fact that they occurred, and the names of their commanders—Aeropos, Menekles, and Demoxenos.[38] There is no sign that any naval assistance was forthcoming, presumably because part to the Ptolemaic fleet was held up in the Aegean and probably also because the Seleukid fleet was able to impose a blockade on Sidon—since Antiochos now held such places as Tyre and Byblos and Berytos, such a blockade was possible. These attempts at relief therefore

35 Polybios 16.39.3.
36 Jerome, *In Danielam*, 11.15–16.
37 Polybios 16.39.4 (from Jos., *AJ* 12.3.3).
38 Jerome, *In Danielam*, 11.15–16.

came by land, and Antiochos will have had to be on his guard in southern Palestine to defeat the Ptolemaic armies. It is difficult to believe that much hope was held out in these attempts, for the distance of the march would allow Antiochos plenty of time to mount his reply.

The siege of Sidon lasted into the early summer of 199, but then Skopas was compelled to surrender, being granted generous terms by which he and his soldiers could go back to Egypt—or to Aitolia.[39] Antiochos would know that they would probably mainly go home. Tyre and Ptolemais-Ake held out a little longer, into 199, and perhaps Joppa did as well, but after the capitulation of Sidon there was little fight left in the Ptolemaic forces and government.[40] Clearly this could also have been one of the objects of the relieving forces from Egypt; clearly also, they failed. But once Joppa was in Antiochos' hands, late in 199, all the lands he had been claiming for a quarter of a century, and his family for a century, were his at last; by early in 198 this campaign was over.[41]

He was then faced with another choice. The Ptolemaic kingdom, though shorn of Koile Syria and Palestine and Phoenicia, still consisted of a large territory: Egypt and Cyrenaica, and numerous coastal and island places in Anatolia and the Aegean. Some of the European places, of course, had now been taken by Philip, who had captured those he could reach in Thrace and the Chersonese; he was besieging Abydos on the Asian side of the Straits when a Roman envoy caught up with him with what was, in effect, a declaration of war. Soon he returned to Macedon, to find that the declaration had arrived just as the Roman invasion force was crossing the Adriatic.[42] From the point of view of both the Ptolemaic and Seleukid kingdoms, both Rome and Philip were now fully preoccupied with each other and so could be ignored in the war in the east.[43]

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[39] Jerome, *In Danielam*, 15–16, is the only indication of the terms; Livy 31.43.5–7 reports Skopas as recruiting still more troops in Aitolia for service in Egypt, the numbers given being 6000 infantry and 500 horse. This was clearly not a large enough force to have any effect in Syria by this time, and was presumably for use in Egypt.

[40] Houghton, *Seleucid Coins*, 409.

[41] Livy 33.19.8.

[42] Walbank, *Philip V*, 133–138.

[43] A Roman delegation had, in fact, visited both Alexandria and Antiochos in 200. The principal purpose was to bind together the alliance against Philip, but the members were also instructed to try to make peace between Ptolemy and Antiochos (Polybios 16.27.5). They actually made no attempt to do this. It is, in fact, not certain they ever met Antiochos. If they did, as Justin puts it, 'Antiochos paid no attention' (31.1.2); there was, of course, no reason why he should.

Antiochos could have gone on to attack Egypt, or he could be content with what he had gained, or he could go back into Anatolia to pick up the remaining Ptolemaic possessions. He chose this last alternative, and it is worth considering the reasons he might have. First, by the time he was free to leave Syria, sometime in 198, the situation in the Aegean and Greece was clearly critical. Philip had made a good fight against Rome in the first campaign, but he was beset by Greek as well as Roman enemies. It behoved a conscientious king to be on hand at such a crisis point; it might also, of course, be possible to extract gains from the situation. Anatolia was a region into which Antiochos had put a lot of effort in the past. He had operated there in 216 to 212, and in 205 to 202, and there were still problems he had to solve in the area. A further visit to collect the Ptolemaic bits and pieces along the coasts might allow him to finish the work. There were still areas to which he, as heir to the Seleukid kings, could make a plausible claim, as well as numerous Ptolemaic outposts whose elimination would obviously assist in maintaining Seleukid power in the region in the future. So there were plenty of factors attracting him into Anatolia.

Egypt was in a bad condition. The rebellions in the south and in the Delta had not been seriously tackled yet, and the regency government in Alexandria was clearly unstable, but it had a legitimate king in the child Ptolemy V, now twelve years old. We do not know if Antiochos ever harboured a wish to reconstitute the empire of Alexander; if he did Egypt would be a prime target, but he never showed any wish to invade it, still less to conquer it. The most convincing interpretation of his career is that he was intent on restoring his family's kingdom to its widest extent. This necessarily entailed a recognition of the existence of the rival kingdoms in Macedon and Egypt whose dynasties were of the same vintage as his own. (In view of future developments it may have been a pity that Antiochos did not seize the opportunity which seemed to exist in 198 to march on Egypt and unite it with his own lands. A combined Seleukid-and-Ptolemaic kingdom would have faced the Roman assault much more successfully than the separate states.)

There were good reasons, however, for avoiding an Egyptian campaign. Most of the earlier attempts at invasion from Syria had failed. Antiochos knew from first-hand experience conditions in the Sinai Desert, and he knew from family history that even the great Antigonos had failed to reach Egypt by that route. The stubborn fight of the Ptolemaic phalanx at Panion, as well as the defeat at Raphia, was good evidence that the Ptolemies held the loyalty of the surviving Greeks in Egypt, despite

the despair and corruption among the higher officers and in the court. By the time Antiochos had to make a decision on his next move, the Egyptian government had had time to organise its defences. Skopas' Sidonian force was back in Egypt, and he had recruited more Aitolians to reinforce them. One suggestion is that he had also been appointed to command the defences of the eastern Delta.[44] There was therefore a substantial army still available to defend Egypt, under a skilful general who could scarcely be removed by a *coup* in Alexandria while he was surrounded by his own people. Despite the destruction of the phalanx at Panion, there were still troops enough available to the regency government in Alexandria. No easy conquest would result.

Going one step further, suppose Antiochos did invade Egypt, defeat the Ptolemaic forces, and capture Alexandria—what then? He would have the child Ptolemy on his hands, and nothing in Antiochos' history suggests that he was capable of killing a child. That problem solved, perhaps by Ptolemy's perpetual imprisonment (the fate of Alexander IV in Macedon and that of Demetrios at Seleukos I's hands provided precedents), there was also the problem of Egypt itself. How to govern the country from outside was an issue which could be even more difficult to deal with. The native Egyptian rebellions were still active, and they could only be encouraged by the defeats of the Ptolemaic regime; indeed, it was not difficult to envisage the surviving Greeks and Macedonians, unreconciled to losing their king, joining the rebel pharaohs in fighting against a Seleukid regime. So even if the initial conquest succeeded, the subsequent war was likely to last a long time. It was a prospect sufficiently unpleasant to daunt even Antiochos the Great, or 'the Great King Antiochos', as he was now being called.

In fact, it seems probable that, even if such considerations were discussed at his court, I was another factor entirely which prevented him going against Egypt. In the 'secret agreement' made with Philip one of the few items generally agreed to have been included was that neither king claimed Egypt itself. Their joint intention had been to strip Ptolemy of his outlying possessions, which could be divided between the two kings, leaving Ptolemy in control of Egypt alone, a kingdom much reduced in power. It would leave the Seleukid king the dominating state from Asia Minor to India, and Philip dominant in Greece and Thrace, including the Straits and the Aegean. Neither king, therefore, had the ambition, or the

[44] Will, *Hist. Pol.*, 2.118 (apparently speculative, for he gives no source).

resources, to contemplate a reconquest of the whole empire of Alexander. Both were trapped inside the political system of the past century in which the lands around the eastern Mediterranean were divided among a group of major kingdoms, with lesser kingdoms grouped around and under them. This also applied on Antiochos' eastern flank, where his eastern campaign had resulted in stabilisation, but where none of the kings had been displaced. None of the political participants of the period could contemplate the removal of any single state—even Rome had left the Syracusan king in power until 212 and the Carthaginian Republic was still in existence even after the Second Punic War. The continued efficacy of the political system required an acceptable diplomatic practice, which, in the case of kingdoms, relied on kings keeping to the letter, if not necessarily to the whole spirit of their agreements. It seems quite possible that the real deterrent for Antiochos was that he had agreed with Philip that neither of them would attack Egypt itself, and he had to keep his word.

The city of Sidon probably fell in the late spring or early summer of 199;[45] it took another year for Antiochos to remove all the vestiges of Ptolemaic rule from the conquered region, by which time, of course, the regime in Egypt had recovered its balance somewhat, and had rearmed. Details are unknown, but a note in Livy, probably based on Polybios, indicates that it was not until the summer of 198 that Antiochos could be satisfied with the situation in Palestine and return to Antioch, where he spent the winter.[46]

Next year, therefore, 197, Antiochos set out on a new campaign in Asia Minor, directed principally at the Ptolemaic possessions around the coasts. The army crossed the Taurus Mountains in the spring, once the passes were open, and marched west along the Royal Road, along which he had campaigned against Akhaios. The Seleukid fleet, with plenty of soldiers on board, and commanded by Antiochos in person, simultaneously set sail along the south coast, taking over the Ptolemaic posts as it went. Some of these resisted, but most surrendered without a fight: Antiochos' fleet was clearly overwhelming.

Here, it may be noted, was another area where Antiochos had been building his strength. At the start of his reign the Seleukid navy was negligible. After all, with only one major Syrian port under his direct control, it was scarcely possible to build up a fleet, though he also had the use, perhaps only after negotiation, of the Aradian fleet. But in 219 a

45 Holleaux, 'Chronologie' (note 8).
46 Livy 33.19.8.

substantial section of the Ptolemaic fleet was captured in Ptolemaic-Ake, and he had a large enough fleet next year to deter the remainder of the Ptolemaic navy from attacking at Porphyrion; in 200/199 similarly no Ptolemaic fleet interfered with his blockade of Sidon. Now in 197 he set off for the Aegean in command of a war fleet of a hundred ships and two hundred other vessels.[47] This is not a fleet of the size built up by Ptolemy II, but it was larger than anything east of Italy. As with other kings who believe they are, or should be, great powers, Antiochos clearly believed he should be strong both by land and sea.

A string of cities along the Kilikian coast fell to him: Mallos in the plain of Smooth Kilikia, across the bay of Iskenderun from Seleukeia-in-Pieria, Soloi and Anemourion, Arsinoe next to Nagidos where Ptolemaios son of Thraseas had connections, and, round the corner, Selinos and Arsinoe in Pamphylia.[48] At that point he reached the great rock of Korakesion, fortified by Ptolemy I and so a major centre of Ptolemaic power in the area ever since. The other places had not resisted, but Korakesion did. It held out for a month before capitulating. No doubt it was the first place he had reached which was defended by a substantial Ptolemaic garrison. It was also, and still is, a hugely difficult obstacle, a steep rock with a solid fortification on the summit.[49]

While there Antiochos received a delegation from Rhodes suggesting that he should not go any further than the Chelidonian Cape, on the western end of the Pamphylian Sea.[50] This created a problem. Antiochos was, by his western moves, coming within range of the conflict between Rome and Macedon. Rhodes was an ally of Rome in the war; the year before Antiochos had already been in some sort of conflict with Attalos of Pergamon,[51] who was also involved as a Roman ally in the war against Philip. Antiochos seemed to be lining up on the Macedonian side, but this was clearly unintentional. He had calmed Attalos, but had then sent his main field army as far as Sardis with no further reaction. Now, with

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[47] Livy 33.19.10.

[48] Jerome, *In Danielam*, 11.15 = Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 46; I have discussed this campaign in *The Roman War of Antiochos the Great*, Leiden 2002, ch. 2.

[49] For a useful description of Korakesion (now Alanya), cf. G.E. Bean, *Turkey's Southern Shore*, London 1968, 76–82.

[50] Livy 33.20.1–2; Livy interprets this as Rhodes acting for Rome and in Roman interests, but this is clearly mistaken; Rhodes was acting in its own interests, and perhaps marginally in Ptolemy's. Rhodes had no wish for an overwhelming Great Power like Antiochos to establish a major naval presence in the Aegean.

[51] Livy 32.8.9–11.

Rhodes, he ignored the warning. His fleet was quite large enough to call the city's bluff, and he moved decisively enough to do so successfully.

There was another element he needed to be wary of. Several of the cities of Pamphylia had formed themselves into an alliance. This had been originally stimulated by the intrusion of Akhaios into Pisidia and Pamphylia in 221/220, but it had continued in existence ever since. It grouped Aspendos, Perge, Sillyon, Phaselis, and probably Termessos and Magydos, into a political league which was defensive in intention; the evidence is largely numismatic, for the cities produced a joint coinage which was clearly dated by the years since the alliance had been formed.[52]

For Antiochos this grouping could have been very awkward. He had one friend in Pamphylia, the city of Side, Korakesion's neighbour, but from there to the Chelidonian Cape the Pamphylian city-alliance was dominant. He did not wish to become involved in Pamphylia, which was not Ptolemaic territory, which could only hold him up, and which led nowhere. (No doubt Rhodes chose the Chelidonian Cape as its *ne plus ultra* on the assumption that this, in combination with the city-alliance in Pamphylia, would in fact keep Antiochos even further back, at Korakesion.) But Antiochos used a maritime version of his political method of contacting a friend in the enemy's rear; he sailed his fleet directly across the Pamphylian Sea (the Bay of Antalya) to a harbour at Korykos, between Phaselis and the Cape. From there he sailed round the Cape and directly along the coast of Lykia, in full naval strength.

On the way Antiochos systematically mopped up the Ptolemaic posts, on the Lykian coast and inland. By arriving swiftly and in great force—all hundred warships, no doubt—Antiochos dared the Rhodians to interfere; at the same time he presumably made it clear to the Rhodians that he had no quarrel with them, and that his destination was Ephesos. They kept quiet. He took over the Ptolemaic posts at Limyra and Andriake, then the great harbour at Patara, and the city of Xanthos, a little inland. Close by was Telmessos, still under the rule of a descendent of Arsinoe II and Lysimachos, placed there by Ptolemy II; he was not disturbed, which means he submitted readily. There was little hope of help from Egypt for any of these places after the destruction at Panion. It is the resistance of Korakesion which is the surprise, not the submissions of all the rest. The seizure of Patara, which had a large and useful harbour only eighty

[52] J.D. Grainger, *The Cities of Pamphylia*, Oxford 2009.

kilometres from the harbour of the city of Rhodes, was particularly important; it became a Seleukid fleet base, and so a direct threat to Rhodes. The Seleukid fleet sailed on to Ephesos, which was captured and which thereupon became Antiochos' maritime base facing onto the Aegean.[53]

By the time Antiochos reached Ephesos there were no Ptolemaic outposts left along the coast of Asia Minor. This voyage took several months, and at some point along the way, or perhaps when he reached Ephesos, negotiations began for a peace treaty. At Alexandria the continued loss of Ptolemaic territories had gradually undermined the position of Aristomenes. He had made considerable progress in dealing with the various rebellions—it was during his time that the rebellion in the Delta was largely suppressed by the conquest of the rebel stronghold at Lykopolis,[54] though only a decade later the trouble flared up again, suggesting that a constant lower level of violence continued in the Delta even after the city was taken. But continual defeats in the external war and the regime's dependence on Aitolian soldiery were sources of unpopularity. During 197, while the Asia Minor campaign was on, the governor of Cyprus, Polykrates of Argos, returned to Alexandria, bringing with him a large sum of money he had saved out of the administration of the island, which he presented to the king.[55]

Polycrates was, at least at first, a political ally of Aristomenes and together they dealt with a political threat from Skopas, who had amassed much treasure and was apparently planning a *coup*, presumably using his Aitolians. It may also be that he was only suspected if it, but his defence was incoherent, and he had become too powerful to be tolerated.[56] He was imprisoned and murdered on Aristomenes' orders. Polykrates then organized the *anakleteria*, the coming-of-age ceremony for the king. In March 196 Ptolemy V was formally crowned pharaoh at Memphis,[57] an action which was a clear threat to Ankhwennefer, and to Aristomenes. Polykrates afterwards gradually supplanted Aristomenes as the king's principal minister. The timing of the removal of Aristomenes is not clear, but it was presumably Polykrates who negotiated the end of the Seleukid

[53] Livy 33.20.1–13; Hieronymos, *In Danielam*, 11.15–16; Polybios 12.40a.
[54] Polybios 27.17.1–7.
[55] Polybios 18.55.3–6.
[56] Polybios 18.53.1–55.8.
[57] L. Koenen, *Eine agonistische Inschrift aus Agypten und fruhptolemäische königsfeste*, Meisenheim 1977, 73–75; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 139 and note 69.

war. The negotiations had been instigated by Aristomenes, but they were not completed until late 196 or 195, so it was probably Polykrates who completed the process.

The lack of further Ptolemaic territories for Antiochos to conquer did not speed matters up, particularly as both sides had to pay attention also to the events in Greece, where Philip was beaten by Rome during 197, and where a peace conference was organized in 196. Rome took the Ptolemaic part and attempted to interfere in the Syrian War, to no avail, since by the time the Roman delegation reached Antiochos at Lysimacheia in the late summer of 196, he had arranged a preliminary peace with his enemy.[58]

Lysimacheia had been abandoned by Philip, and had then been taken and sacked by the local Thracians. Antiochos took it over, rebuilt it, and sought out and returned the scattered and enslaved inhabitants.[59] He went on to campaign in Thrace, and took over the ex-Ptolemaic towns and cities of the area, some of which had already suffered at Philip's hands, and were also restored. For the king this was all part of his Egyptian (or 'Syrian') War, though it had become a Thracian war.[60]

The terms of peace arranged with Ptolemy, presumably by way of Aristomenes and Polykrates, were essentially a recognition by Ptolemy V of Antiochos' conquests, and the peace was to be confirmed by a marriage alliance by which Ptolemy would marry Antiochos' daughter Kleopatra, a neat reversal of the previous attempt to link the two dynasties, and one more likely to be successful. The meeting with the Romans at Lysimacheia was interrupted by a rumour that Ptolemy had died, and Antiochos thereupon sailed as quickly as possible back to Seleukeia-in-Pieria, though his fleet was badly damaged in a storm as it sailed through the strait between Cyprus and Kilikia. It is claimed in one source that he was attempting to invade Cyprus at the time, but the site of the wreck was some distance beyond where he would have turned off to get to the island.[61]

If the rumour was true, this was as big a crisis as the Mediterranean world could imagine. If Ptolemy was dead, there was no heir of the family to take over the kingdom. Any agreement Antiochos had made with him was void, in the usual way, though if the betrothal of Ptolemy with Kleopatra had been formalized, Antiochos might have had a claim on

58 Livy 33.39.1–40.6.
59 Livy 33.38.10–14.
60 J.D. Grainger, 'Antiochos III and Thrace', *Historia* 45, 1996, 329–343.
61 Livy 33.41.1–9; he treats the episode almost as a joke, completely missing the point.

Ptolemy's territories on her behalf. Whatever the legal situation, politically it was obviously necessary for him to be in Syria rather than at Lysimacheia, at such a time. Any number of possibilities, from civil war in Egypt to conquest by Ankhwennefer to a military *coup* in Alexandria to a new invasion of Palestine existed.

As it happened, Ptolemy had not died. The source of the rumour is never identified, though the situation in Alexandria, with the young king largely hidden away from public gaze by his immurement in the palace, and by the repeated *coups*, intrigues, and murders of the past ten years, was clearly conducive to the production of such rumours. The possible threat to Cyprus—perhaps another rumour, travelling in the other direction—will have encouraged the Ptolemaic government to work for an early peace before yet more of its territory was seized; the possibility that Ptolemy would die will also have encouraged Antiochos to move quickly to a ratified peace, and to see that the marriage of his daughter took place. The winter of 196/195 thereupon saw the final conclusion of the peace treaty between the kings,[62] and in 194/193 the marriage took place, symbolically at Raphia on the borders of the two states, close to where the battle had taken place over twenty years before.[63]

The terms of the peace treaty are nowhere set out, and have to be elicited from presumptions and later conditions.[64] Clearly the most important were the territorial clauses, which are obvious. The betrothal of Ptolemy V and Kleopatra was another. Perhaps there were more, and one in particular has brought considerable discussion. Kleopatra will have brought a dowry with her, and since she was the daughter of a king and marrying a king it will have been substantial. (That of Berenike, the wife of Antiochos II, was notoriously large and rich.)

The dowry is never specified, though it will have been detailed in the treaty. Later it was said to be either the lands of Koile Syria or the revenues therefrom.[65] This only emerged later, in the preliminary crisis which led to the next war (see next chapter). It is, of course, merely an invented detail. It is not believable that, having fought two long and difficult wars and finally succeeded, Antiochos III would give up any part of Koile

[62] This is assumed from the subsequent ravage, but no direct evidence exists.

[63] Livy 35.13.4.

[64] In Will's great work, for example, the Koile Syrian campaigns are on pages 118–121, and the Asia Minor campaign (in a chapter entitled 'Rome contre Antiochos III (198–188)') on pages 178–186, and the peace is on 190–193, so destroying the continuity of the whole process and making Antiochos' work meaningless.

[65] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 155–156.

Syria. But the fact that the claim was made and taken seriously, in Egypt and elsewhere, is evidence that the Ptolemaic regime was not reconciled to the loss of its Syrian lands. The vindication of the Seleukid claim was the beginning of Ptolemaic revanchist claims. The Seleukid conquest was only the next stage in the contest, not its termination.

It may be pointed out that the war really did last as long as that—from 202 to 195. It is conventional to separate the fighting in Koile Syria between 202 and 198 from the campaign in Asia Minor from 197 to 196. Indeed the latter is all too often taken as a preliminary of the war with Rome which Antiochos fell into later. But this is to accept the Roman interpretation of events, as seen by Livy. Stand in Antioch or Alexandria and the perspective changes.

The Fifth Syrian War was decisive for the foreign empire of the Ptolemaic dynasty, for afterwards the kings retained only Cyrenaica and Cyprus, along with three posts in the Aegean, at Itanos, Thera, and Methana, which were really in Rhodes' or Rome's sphere by 196. At the same time it was decisive for the future of the dynasty in Egypt. Already in 197 much of the rebellion in the Delta had been suppressed, and now that there was no war with Antiochos it became possible for the government to concentrate its military attention fully on the situation in the south. As usual, the peace between the kings was effectively a guarantee of no further hostilities between them until one of them died. Ankhwennefer had retaken Thebes during 196 after a brief Ptolemaic reconquest, but he was also under pressure from the king of Meroe further south, who was in control of the Nile as far north as Syene by this time. The coronation of Ptolemy V as pharaoh in 196 was a public statement of intent, and the peace with Syria released troops and energies which could now be applied in the south. There are indications of considerable fighting in the Nile Valley to the north of Thebes in the next years,[66] and Ankhwennefer was not easily beaten. But Ptolemy controlled the richest part of Egypt, and his wealth could be used to recruit more soldiers. It would be only a matter of time before the rebellion in the south was crushed.[67]

66 W. Clarysse, 'Ptolemaic Papyri from Lycopolis', *Actes du XVe Congrès Internationale de Papyrologie*, Brussels 1978–1979, 101–106.

67 M. Alliott, 'La Fin de la Résistance Egyptienne dans le Sud sous Epiphane', *REA* 1952, 18–26.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# CHANGING PRIORITIES

After seven years, Ptolemaic Egypt in 195 was free of the latest Syrian war, this time having to face up to disaster. If a post-war study was made in Alexandria, the blame could have been cast in several directions, against the regency government in Alexandria, against Antiochos, against the rebel Egyptians, even against Rome for failing to give support. From this distance all except the last of these contributed to defeat, but above all internal rebellion and chaos in the government in Alexandria was surely a lethal combination, and no doubt this became the contemporary view as well, for these were elements which Ptolemy V could deal with.

Yet conditions had changed radically. In particular the power of the king to direct affairs had been seriously impaired. One of the effects of the governmental instability had been the emergence of a group of rich and powerful Alexandrian families, enriched by their proximity to the throne and their possession of lands in the *chora*, and powerful by that wealth and their access to government office. Sosibios had headed one of these families, and others are associated with the names of other prominent men of the time—Polykrates, Agathokles, Pelops, perhaps Tlepolemos. In addition, and partly in reaction to the power of these men, there emerged a group of eunuchs of whom Artistonikos was the earliest to become prominent; kings tended to trust such men simply because they were assumed to lack the hereditary impulse (not necessarily so, of course).

Central government in Alexandria had therefore become a more precarious, though perhaps at times consensual, process than in the great days of Ptolemy II Philadelphos. The effect of the native Egyptian rebellion had also been to reduce the power of the government in Alexandria. The obvious recourse for dealing with it was to fight the rebels militarily, while at the same time conciliating their underlying complaints. Evidence for this is in the Rosetta Stone, recording a decree produced after a meeting of the Egyptian priests in Memphis in 196,[1] which shows much

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[1] *OGIS* 90 = Austin 289; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 165–168.

more native Egyptian influence, for example in the titles of the king, than earlier similar decrees. That is, partly as a result of the military services performed by the Egyptian soldiers at Raphia (referred to in the Stone as the 'warrior class'), and partly by the threat posed by the rebellions, Ptolemy had to be much more attentive to the leaders of Egyptian opinion, who were generally the priests of the Egyptian temples—at least these were the men who were identified as such leaders, not least by themselves. This attention, of course, was time-consuming and expensive, and in effect added more to the costs which had to be borne by the taxpayers.

All this was a long-term policy. The military reconquest of rebel territory took another ten years after the conclusion of the peace treaty with Antiochos; and the evidence is that the king never did recover full control over the Alexandrian government machine. With regard to the attitude of the native Egyptians, the success of the rebellion in the south (the independent regime at Thebes lasted over 20 years) destroyed the prestige of the monarchy, a matter assisted by the comprehensive defeat by Antiochos III in the external war. From 200 onwards, the Ptolemaic kingdom was permanently weakened.

The overall effect of the Fifth Syrian War seemed to reduce Ptolemaic Egypt to the status of a Seleukid client, for the king was now married to a Seleukid princess. When she was mature Kleopatra proved to be as determined and vigorous as any of her forebears, and proved to be a supporter of Ptolemaic royal power. A tentative Roman interest, evident in attempts to use the Ptolemaic situation in 196 as a lever against Antiochos III,[2] faded with the peace of Raphia. This condition did not really change with the death of Antiochos in 187; Kleopatra's brother became king as Seleukos IV. These relationships, however, do not seem to have rendered Ptolemy powerless. No real influence of the Seleukid kings in Egypt can be identified. Kleopatra's influence was nil at first, since she was no more than ten years old at her marriage. At most she was later unwilling to return to war with her brother, but this was a sensible policy for a regime which needed to concentrate on internal affairs and recovery rather than indulging in foreign adventures.

In 192 Antiochos III became entangled in a new war, this time with the Roman Republic. He was successful for a year, even gaining control of a substantial section of Greece, but then fought a defensive war until finally defeated at Magnesia in 189. Philip V's decision to support the Roman

[2] Polybios 18.50.5; one of the topics brought up at the Lysimacheia conference between Antiochos and the Roman envoys.

side was crucial. The subsequent treaty stripped Antiochos of Asia Minor once more, to the benefit of Attalos and Rhodes (but not Ptolemy). The terms of peace included a requirement to pay a regular indemnity. Altogether the defeat, humiliation, and reduction in power (his navy was taken as well), left the Seleukids without any power to dominate Egypt, even if they had wished to do so. Antiochos did, however, keep Koile Syria. A year later he was dead, killed in another military adventure in Iran.[3]

This defeat for his enemy relieved Ptolemy V of any pressure, but the main factor which dimmed Ptolemaic lights and pushed the kingdom into introspection was the continuing war in the south and in the Delta. The Pharaoh Ankhwennefer may have come to an agreement with the Meroitic king, which enabled him to concentrate on extending his power northwards. The Nubian kings Arqamani (also called Ergamenes) and his successor Adakhalamani, who between them reigned at Meroe between about 218 and about 190, were commemorated in inscriptions at the Egyptian temple at Philae. This must be taken as a sign that 'towards the end of the third century' Arqamani had taken political control of the Dodekaschoenos, that part of the Nile Valley south from Philae, and that he had passed this control on to his successor. The stele of Adakhalamani at Philae was found broken and reused, placed face down to the earth, in a temple built for Ptolemy V.[4]

This may indicate an alliance between the Meroe kings and the rebel Egyptian pharaohs, or the conquest of the Dodekaschoenos at the expense of the latter. It may be conquest followed by a cession of territory and peace. Whatever the precise meaning, Ankhwennefer was certainly under pressure from both south and north, though there was no alliance between his enemies. Certainly the fate of the stele of Adakhalamani is a sign of Ptolemaic hostility to Meroe after the reconquest in 186. The Alexandrian government will have been opposed to Meroitic expansion north along the Nile whether it was done with or against the rebel regime.

Details of events in the south are extremely scarce, as ever, but it seems that the rebel regime was able to fight off Ptolemaic attacks for several years after the peace arranged with Antiochos III in 195. The capture

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3 Polybios 28.20.9; App. *Syr.*, 11.5; Josephus, *AJ* 12.154; Gruen, *Hellenistic World*, 684 n. 63.

4 L. Torok, 'To the History of the Dodekaschoenos between ca. 250 BC and 298 AD', *ZAS* 107, 1980, 76–86; A. Farih, 'The Stele of Ankhalamani found at Philae', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologische Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 34, 1978, 53–56; royal dates are from D.A. Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush*, London 1996, 208.

of the rebel centre of Lykopolis in the Delta in 197[5] was important for limiting the spread of the insurrection in the north, though this may well have been a separate rebellion. A papyrus document written soon after the reconquest, and referring to the city of Lykopolis in Middle Egypt (not the rebel centre in the Delta), makes it clear that the damage committed in the fighting was extensive: 'most of the *laoi* (the workers of the land) have been destroyed', 'nobody pays for this (land) to the treasury'. The official was, of course, most concerned about this last problem, but it is clear that the region was in danger of reverting to desert or wilderness.[6]

Polybios refers to another (or the same) insurrection in the Delta region, which was brought to an end in 185;[7] it had clearly lasted some time and was also the cause of much damage. The fighting was no doubt mainly low-level guerrilla warfare in the reeds and canals and swamps, and it can only have distracted Ptolemaic attention from the main rebellion in the south—the area of the fighting was not all that far from Alexandria. The two areas of rebellion—in the south and in the Delta—did not link up, at least not geographically, though their purposes were undoubtedly both anti-Ptolemaic.

Despite all these internal troubles, the Ptolemaic regime did its best to make an international recovery. Antiochos III became involved in war with Rome in 192, and the regents in Alexandria (Ptolemy V was only 17 or 18 at the time, though he had been declared of age in 196) tried to involve Egypt, with the clear intention that Roman military success in Greece should be translated into a recovery of territory by Ptolemy. They did not attack Antiochos directly, since this would be to break their king's oath, but they did offer to assist Rome financially, or by sending an army to fight the Aitolians, who were allies of Antiochos at the time. This was in 191, after Antiochos had been driven out of Greece. A second attempt to involve themselves later in the year was ignored.[8] The Senate

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5 Polybios 22.17.1–2.

6 W. Clarysse, 'Ptolemaic Papyri from Lycopolis', *Actes du XVe Congrès Internationale du Papyrologie*, Brussels 1978–1979, 101–106, republished in full by B. McGing, 'Revolt Egyptian Style'. There seems to be a confusion between this Lykopolis, which is Asyut in Middle Egypt, and Polybios' Lykopolis, which was in the Delta, near Bubastis. Clarysse's document makes it clear that the Middle Egyptian city was involved in the Theban rebellion, and it seems best to put Polybios' story there also. The next piece of Polybios does refer to a rebellion in the Delta, but it was twelve years later and must be seen as separate.

7 Polybios 22.17.3.

8 Livy 36.4.1–3 and 37.3.9–11.

believed it was quite capable of defeating its enemies without Egyptian help, and was not interested in helping Ptolemy to recover territory lost in the Fifth Syrian War, which could be the only reason for Egyptian participation. In the peace of Apameia which followed, none of the former Egyptian possessions (Ephesos, for example, or the Karian cities) were returned.

There is a record, in two copies of a decree of Ptolemy V, that a Ptolemaic naval expedition attempted to provoke Antiochos by a raid on Arados, from which it is said to have returned with plenty of loot. This is recorded in the 23rd year of Ptolemy V, which is 182, but it took place before that. It seems to be associated with a reference to the meeting at Apameia in Asia Minor at which the details of the peace settlement between Rome and Antiochos were sorted out. This had taken place in 188, so it seems likely that the Arados raid was an attempt by Ptolemy to become involved in the peace process—unsuccessfully, since Rome ignored it and Antiochos did not respond. Arados, after all, was a semi-autonomous city, and could look after itself.[9] The raid was conducted by the eunuch Aristonikos, a high official of the regime, but it was nevertheless only a raid by an official on a city which had much autonomy; this was about as far as the regime could go without provoking a full-scale war. The perpetrators may have hoped for such an outcome, with Antiochos' retaliation branded as aggression. This would give Ptolemy the status of a combatant at the Apameian conference; alternatively the aim may have been to stir up a rebellion against Antiochos in Phoenicia, on the assumption that the cities there (Tyre, Sidon, and so on) hankered for the good old days of Ptolemaic rule—there is no sign that they did. Peace between Rome and Antiochos III had not yet been agreed at the time. Antiochos had lost many soldiers and all his warships in the Roman war, and had to hand over much of his treasure as an indemnity. (Roman peace terms were even more brutal and unpleasant for the loser than anything ever dictated by any of the Ptolemaic or Seleukid dynasties.) The Ptolemaic raid was not really in any danger of provoking a renewal of war in Syria, for Antiochos was clearly in full legal and actual possession, but that it was made strongly indicates the

[9] G. Daressy, 'Un decret de l'an XXIII de Ptolémée Epiphane', *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptienne et assyrien*, 32, 1911, 1–8, and 'Un second exemplair du decret de l'an XXIII de Ptolémée Epiphane', in the same of 38, 1916/1917, 175–179. It is assumed by Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 141, that the 'Apameia' mentioned is that in Syria, but that city was a great military centre, and most unlikely to be taken by a naval raid.

continuing political detestation between the two kingdoms, despite the marriage link. Ptolemy and his government were by no means reconciled to the loss of Koile Syria.

Peace with Antiochos III in 195, and in the eastern Mediterranean generally after 188, and then the death of Antiochos III in 187, were therefore the primary elements in the international background to the renewed military push south along the Nile, which took place at this time. A new commander, Komanos, was able to gain control of Deir el-Medina, close to Thebes, during 187. In that year also the Meroitic presence at Syene (Aswan) in the Dodekaschoenos ended, possibly as a result of diplomatic action by Komanos.[10] The next year, August 186, Ankhwennefer was drawn into a final battle, in which Komanos' forces were victorious; Ankhwennefer was captured, his son killed.[11] Later in the year the assembly of priests at Memphis recorded on the Rosetta Stone asked that Ankhwennefer be pardoned. Ptolemy V graciously—or rather diplomatically—agreed; no doubt Ankhwennefer remained in prison the rest of his life.[12]

At the same time Polykrates of Argos was fighting the guerrilla war in the Delta with equal success. He finally ended the fighting by a calculated act of bad faith. The rebel leaders, named by Polybios as Athinis, Pausiras, Chesufast, and Irobastis, all Egyptian names, had been driven to near defeat, and were induced to go to a meeting at Sais in the Delta to receive promised pardons. But the king ordered them to be seized, humiliated them, and then had them tortured to death. There was some carefully deliberate confusion over the responsibility for this breaking of faith, whereby Polykrates appeared to be acting in the king's name, but Ptolemy later distanced himself. It did end the rebellion, at least for the time being, but was hardly the action of the government intent on reconciliation.[13]

After twenty years of fighting, of course, it is highly unlikely that any member of the Ptolemaic government had any wish for anything other than a complete reconquest of rebel territory and, if necessary, the peace of a destroyed land. Its whole rationale, as the official who wrote the report on the condition of the land at Lykopolis showed, was to continue

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[10] K.T. Zauzich, 'Die demotischen Papyri von den Inseln Elephantine', in E. van 't Dack *et al.* (eds) *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, Studia Hellenistica 27, Louvain 1983, 421–435; H. Hauben, 'The barges of the Komanos family', *Ancient Society* 19, 1988, 207–211.

[11] M. Alliot, 'La Fin de la Résistance Egyptienne dans le sud sous Epiphane', *REA* 54, 1952, 18–26.

[12] *P. Koln* 7, 313, summarised by McGing, 'Revolt Egyptian Style', 283–289.

[13] Polybios 22.17.3–7.

extracting tax revenue, and any defiance which got in the way of that work threatened the whole system—and that included the wealthy lifestyle of the officials. Further, by the time the internal war was over in 185, Antiochos III was dead, and a new Seleukid king, Seleukos IV, was ruling. This, on past form, portended the danger of a new war. Seleukos, in fact, was hindered by his father's treaty with Rome, which required the continued payment of a regular tribute. In theory, of course, this could have been stopped by Antiochos III's death, since the treaty was with the king, not the kingdom, but Rome was not a monarchy and insisted on the continued application of the peace terms. Seleukos certainly delayed at least some of the tribute payments, since his brother and successor made great play with his final settlement of payment long after it should have been completed.[14]

Seleukos had no wish to renew the Syrian wars. He had no need, for he had no territorial demands on Egypt. If anyone was to revive the inter-dynastic conflict, it had to be Ptolemy V. And Ptolemy, with the southern and Delta rebellions still smouldering into 185, was in no position to do so, even though it is certain he had ambitions to recover lost Syria. He appears to have made some preparations to fight a new Syrian war, but he never reached the position of being able to start one—nor did Seleukos ever show any real apprehension that he was going to be attacked. One high Ptolemaic functionary, the eunuch Aristonikos, who had commanded the raid an Arados, was in Greece in 185 recruiting soldiers, and while this did not necessarily imply a war, the fighting to suppress the Egyptian rebels had finished by that time.[15] Further supplies of military cannon fodder were always required, but at the time no obvious war was involving Ptolemy. It may have been the beginning of a new arms race.

Nevertheless the position of subordination to which the peace treaty and the marriage of Ptolemy with Kleopatra had reduced the kingdom was one from which it had wriggled free, helped by the Roman victory at Magnesia, the elimination of the Seleukid navy, and the death of Antiochos III. It was not due to increased Ptolemaic strength, though the ending of the rebellions helped, but was mainly the result of the reduction

[14] The continuing wealth of the Seleukid kingdom is emphasised by G. Le Rider, 'Les Resources financières de Séleucus IV (187–175) et le paiement de l'indemnité aux Romains', in M.J. Price et al. (eds), *Essays in honour of Robert Carson and Kenneth Jenkins*, London 1993, 49–67.

[15] Polybios 22.22.

in Seleukid power. The mission of Aristonikos in Greece in 185 was only one of several diplomatic contacts with the Greek states designed to emphasize that Ptolemy was an independent agent; an alliance was concluded, or renewed, with the only remaining Greek state of any power, the Akhaian League.[16] Contact was also maintained with Rome, which showed its customary disdain. Cumulatively, however, Ptolemy V had achieved a position of renewed independence and some local influence by the time he died in 180.

He was assisted in this policy by his wife. Kleopatra was referred to in Egypt as 'Syra', 'the Syrian', but she seems to have identified herself with her husband's kingdom as much as any other Ptolemaic queen. The couple produced three children between about 186 and the king's death, two sons and a daughter, and this therefore ensured the continuation of the dynasty; for twenty years Ptolemy V had been its sole member.

The existence of the royal children rendered Kleopatra's position stronger, but it also paradoxically weakened that of her husband. The legacy of his minority and the wars had been to enhance the assertiveness and power of the greater families of Alexandria and the members of the court, the successors of the domineering regents of his childhood and of his father's time. An anecdote in Diodoros has a courtier complaining that Ptolemy was not making any effort to recover Koile Syria, which suggests that there was an actual faction, possibly including Aristonikos the eunuch, who were agitating for a new Syrian war. Yet it is this anecdote which is also interpreted as indicating the cause of the king's death. He was murdered by courtiers who are said to have feared that he was about to gather the wealth needed to finance the war by confiscating the possessions of those courtiers. (Ptolemy pointed to such men and commented that they were his 'money bags'.[17]) Since the courtiers' wealth was in all likelihood gained by exploiting their positions at court, and by gaining sinecures and official positions which paid well, Ptolemy's comment seems sensible if incautious; the courtiers' reaction in assassinating the king, which was done in the knowledge that his eldest son was only six years old, was also comprehensible, though somewhat extreme: Ptolemy's death removed the threat to their wealth and produced the prospect of another long minority in which they could continue to be powerful and to increase their wealth. (On the other hand, he is said to have been poisoned, which is an accusation all too frequently made when

[16] Polybios 22.7.5–9 and 9.1–12.
[17] E.g., Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 143.

a king died unexpectedly—Antiochos II is another example—it may be that Ptolemy simply died of illness.) But the real force of the anecdote is in its information that the king wished to recover Koile Syria, and that it was the difficulty of financing a new war which was delaying him. Since no new war resulted, at least not yet, the assassins may be said to have succeeded.

The 'money-bags' anecdote also suggests that Ptolemy was beginning, or continuing, to exert and increase his own royal power as against the powerful courtiers and the great landowners. This is another aspect of the case. He had been formally crowned, at the instance of Polykrates, long ago, but it will have taken time and effort and maturity for him to gain or recover real control over his court and the government machine. The faction of the warmongers—those who were advocating an early Syrian war—could be enlisted in his support if he went ahead with the war, but his death came first.

Kleopatra emerged as regent for her children after her husband's death, specifically for her eldest son, who became Ptolemy VI and later took the name Philometor. Any intentions there had been of fighting a new war for Syria were abandoned. This is generally assumed to be because Kleopatra was of the Seleukid family, and was in some way loyal to and friendly with her brother.[18] This may well have been one factor in the situation, but it is more likely that the internal court politics in Alexandria were at the basis of the policy. The killers of Ptolemy V were against the renewal of war because they might have to pay for it, and by their action they had obviously prevailed over the warmongering faction. Kleopatra may thus be seen as a figurehead of the anti-war faction, which was more devoted to peace as a policy because it allowed them more power and the ability to continue to get rich out of the profits of the kingdom. A war would enhance the power of the soldiers at the courtiers' expense.

Kleopatra's name appears in documents before that of her son the king, which is no more than a sign that he was still a minor.[19] She also had coins minted in her name.[20] How far she was in control of government policy is not at all clear; quite possibly all she could do was prevent actions she disliked rather than promote initiatives. She was

[18] Diod. 29.29; Porphyry *FGrH* 260 F 68.

[19] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 143.

[20] One is reproduced in G.M.A. Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks* (revised by R.R.R. Smith), Oxford 1984, figs. 210 and 212, and by J. Whitehouse, *Cleopatras*, London 1994, fig. 3.

certainly unlikely to retain much power if the war began. That is, it is a plausible idea that she continued the policy of peace essentially because anything more belligerent would relegate her even more decisively into powerlessness.

Kleopatra died in April or May of 176.[21] Her eldest son, then aged about ten, was still too young to rule, and two men emerged as his regents. They are an odd pair: Eulaios was a eunuch, and had been the king's tutor while Kleopatra lived, and he marks a further stage in the rise to power of such men; the second, Lenaios, was a slave, originally from Syria (and so presumably originally one of Kleopatra's household), and seems to have had charge of the kingdom's finances.[22] These connections make it probable that they succeeded to their posts as a result of dispositions organized by Kleopatra while she was dying. They were accepted by other power groups, no doubt in part because their servile conditions made them no threat to any of those in the court, and also because the faction which had supported Kleopatra was still predominant, and perhaps because none of the factions could bear to see a rival group take the regency positions.

The new regents, therefore, may be presumed to have had only a precarious hold on power, because their patroness was dead, and because their conditions (slave and eunuch) will have produced general contempt; they were probably subject to heavy pressures from the court factions. Eulaios was the senior of the pair, and was able, like Kleopatra, to issue coins in his own name, so he may have had the official position of regent.[23] They were able to bolster their positions by staging the marriage of Ptolemy VI and his sister Kleopatra II, who had already been entitled king and queen, and the boy had been awarded divine honours.[24] Both were still children (11 and 9, apparently). Since the newly crowned king was so young, the coronation was clearly a political manoeuvre on the part of Eulaios and Lenaios, designed to bolster their own positions. (Promoting Kleopatra II to queen was also no doubt an indication that the two would later marry.) But the pacific policy inherited from the dead Kleopatra and which the two regents might have wished to continue, was soon undermined. In Antioch the pacific Seleukos IV died in 175. He was succeeded by a younger brother under circumstances which destabilized

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21 J.D. Ray, *The Archive of Hor*, London 1976, 79.
22 O. Mørkholm, 'Eulaios and Lenaios', *Classica et Medievalia* 22, 1961, 32–43.
23 Polybios 28.20.5 and 21.1.
24 Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 143.

the Seleukid kingdom once more, and this encouraged those in Egypt keen to reopen the conflict over Koile Syria, and thereby opened the way to a new war.

Seleukos had been a generally peaceful king, but he had not been wholly quiescent. He had defaulted seriously on the tribute payments due to Rome[25]—which does not seem to have complained, curiously. He had maintained a diplomatic friendship with Macedon, to the extent of marrying his daughter Laodike to Philip V's son and successor Perseus, so reviving or maintaining the old connection between the two kingdoms and dynasties.[26] He had continued diplomatic relations with the Akhaian League in Greece[27] (as did Ptolemy V), and had intervened, though ineffectively, in quarrels between the kingdoms in Anatolia.[28] But he had been gravely weakened by his father's defeat by Rome, by the loss of Asia Minor, by the confiscation of treasure involved in Rome's indemnity, and by his father's death soon after the punishing peace concluded at Apameia.

He ruled, of course, a substantially reduced kingdom, and while the dynasty's prestige was undoubtedly heightened by the victory over the old Egyptian enemy, the defeat by Rome had the same effect as that by Ptolemy III: territory was taken away, and other areas took the opportunity to detach themselves. The Armenian kingdoms were hardly attached at all after the murder of King Xerxes by Antiochis, but must now be assumed to be fully independent; two new kings, probably beginning new dynasties, divided the land between them.[29] In the east, the balance achieved by Antiochos III at the end of his eastern expedition broke down on his death—which, of course, ended the terms on which the political construction had been made in his eastern expedition—and the Greek Baktrian kingdom, under a new king, Demetrios, began to launch attacks on its neighbours, and invasions of India.

There were no apparent direct threats to Seleukos' kingdom in these events—the Baktrians and the Asia Minor kingdoms did not threaten him—but they had to be watched. Antiochos III died in an attack on a local temple in Elymais, where he hoped to confiscate the temple treasure.[30] This inevitably did pose a threat to Seleukos' inherited authority

25 Livy 42.6.6.
26 Polybios 25.4.8; Livy 42.12.3; App., *Macedonian Wars* 11.2.
27 Polybios 22.10.4 and 12.13; Diod. 29.17.
28 Diod. 29.24.
29 Strabo 11.528 and 531.
30 Diod. 28.3 and 29.19; Strabo 16.1.18; Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.253; Justin 32.2.1.

in that area, but he is not recorded as doing anything about it, though this may be due simply to a gap in the sources. It would be surprising if no revenge attack was made on the king's killers. Even if one was, and was successful, the authority of the king was surely weakened in the region.

Seleukos was murdered by his minister Heliodoros in September 175,[31] an event similar to the death of Seleukos' brother-in-law Ptolemy V five years previously. Both kingdoms, that is, produced governmental systems in which the ministers of the king were able to acquire sufficient authority to form power bases independent of the king, and so were able to survive an act which would normally be rapidly avenged by the king's bodyguard and supporters. Heliodoros was perhaps in much the same position as Hermeias in Antiochos III's first years, and quite possibly acted to pre-empt his own killing. The Ptolemaic state was more likely to require such powerful men because of the huge and complicated and almost uncontrollable bureaucratic system; the Seleukid state, less bureaucratic, at least outside the former Ptolemaic Koile Syria,[32] seems to have been less liable to produce such men—or perhaps the kings were generally much more active in governing and vigilant at detecting abuses. Much of the actual governing was, of course, conducted at a local or provincial level. The problem in Alexandria was also the repeated royal minorities, though it is the case that the powerful ministers first appeared in the reign of the adult Ptolemy III, not a notably inactive king.

The murder of Seleukos IV led to a complicated succession crisis, which has been much discussed,[33] involving a royal minority, an overpowerful minister, and an ambitious uncle. At first Seleukos' son Antiochos was proclaimed king, probably by Heliodoros. The boy's mother, Queen Laodike, is portrayed on a gold coin along with the new king, which presumably means that she was the official regent[34] (as with the

[31] II *Maccabees* 3.4–40.

[32] The dossier of documents concerning an issue in Koile Syria in the early years of Seleukid rule found at Skythopolis (Austin 193) shows just how complex and impenetrable the Ptolemaic system could be, and it was worse in Egypt itself.

[33] The best discussion is by O. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria*, Copenhagen 1966; see also A. Aymard, 'Autour de l'Avènement d'Antiochus IV', *Historia* 2, 1953, 49–73; M. Zambelli, 'L'ascesa al trono di Antioco IV epifane di Siria', *Rivista di Filologia* 88, 1960, 362–389; J.G. Bunge, '"Theos Epihanes", zu den ersten funf Regierungsjahren Antiochos' IV Epiphanes', *Historia* 23, 1974, 57–85; cf also Will, *Hist. Pol.*, 2.303–305.

[34] O. Mørkholm, 'The Accession of Antiochos IV of Syria', *ANSMN* 11, 1964, 63–76.

appearance of Kleopatra Syra on Egyptian coins). Laodike was a daughter of Antiochos III; she had been married to her brother Antiochos the Younger until his death in 193, then to Seleukos in a marriage policy imitated from Ptolemaic practice and introduced by Antiochos III.[35] She had a daughter by Antiochos, Nysa, and three children by Seleukos.[36] Their daughter was the Laodike who was by then the wife of Perseus of Macedon. The eldest son, Demetrios, who, if the line of succession had been followed, would have become king, was at the time of his father's death in exile in Rome, serving as a hostage to control Seleukos in some way; the new king Antiochos was Demetrios' younger brother, aged about four or five years at his proclamation.

It is assumed that this was a situation contrived by Heliodoros, though the complicity of Laodike cannot be excluded. It is a fact that the Seleukid royal family, in whom the regulation of the succession lay, had never diverted from the rule of primogeniture, though in two cases the chosen successor died before the father, but in those cases the succession went to the next son, apparently without question. The current king decided who his successor should be, but by this time, after a century of successions, the rule was invariably that the eldest son succeeded.[37] The situation in 175 was therefore highly anomalous. Kings had died by violence before,[38] but, whether or not a successor had been publicly nominated beforehand, the eldest son had always succeeded. It could have been possible to wait for Demetrios' arrival from Italy, which would have taken only a few weeks (scarcely longer than bringing Antiochos III from Babylon to succeed his brother in 223). His arrival, an adult, would certainly have led to Heliodoros' execution for the murder of Seleukos IV: hence Heliodoros' desperate measure of making the child king, and Laodike as nominal regent, but with himself still effectively in control.

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35 Though marriages of the Seleukid kings were often to their relatives, as were those between Seleukid and Antigonids.

36 Ogden, *Polygamy*, 140–142.

37 The exceptions are: Antiochos I had his eldest son Seleukos executed, so Antiochos II became the heir; Seleukos III died suddenly, apparently without offspring, so Antiochos III succeeded; Antiochos III's eldest son Antiochos the younger (who had commanded the cataphracts at Panion) died before his father, and Seleukos IV, the next son, became heir, and the next king.

38 Death by violence was in fact normal for Seleukid kings: Seleukos I was murdered, Antiochos II perhaps murdered; Seleukos II died in a riding accident; Seleukos III was murdered; Antiochos III died in battle. Later in the dynasty death by violence was always the kings' fates. Antiochos I (and perhaps Antiochos II) was the only king who died 'naturally'.

Heliodoros' programme quickly came unstuck. Seleukos had a younger brother, another Antiochos, who had been in Rome as hostage until the year before, when he had been exchanged for Demetrios, his nephew.[39] He was in Athens when his brother was killed, having shown no intention of returning to Syria.[40] (As a hostage, therefore, his value was low by comparison with Seleukos' eldest son, and the longer Seleukos ruled that value would continue to decline; this may well be why Rome had wanted the exchange.) Now, however, he did want to get to Syria, and was assisted on his way by King Eumenes II of Pergamon, who provided him with a small force of troops.[41] His arrival, of course, upset the arrangements made by Heliodoros.

We may assume that the Seleukid court had factions, one of which followed Heliodoros, while others were presumably opposed to him, or possibly even indifferent. Queen Laodike, the daughter of a king, the widow of two kings and the mother of the new king, had very high prestige, and it was her favour for which the factions competed; yet she was probably unable to take any action herself, certainly not while Heliodoros dominated the court. (No doubt the precedent of Antiochos III's murder of Hermeias was in everyone's mind.) She would thus need to operate through adherents who would be part of separate factions. The arrival of Antiochos provided a new focus for the opponents of Heliodoros, but Antiochos had his own agenda and ambitions. The early result was that Heliodoros disappeared, no doubt murdered or executed, not surprisingly. Antiochos then married Laodike (her third brother-husband), while the boy Antiochos' rights to the throne were safeguarded by his adoption by his stepfather.[42]

There are, of course, a number of similarities here with the events at the Alexandrian court in the previous decade. The differences are equally clear: the rapid elimination of Heliodoros (by probable murder) and Laodike (by marriage) from the exercise of power resulted in the crisis at Antioch being only brief, and it ended with a mature man in control. According to the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries, the time from the death of Seleukos to the accession of Antiochos IV was two months (from month VI to month VIII, September to November 175).[43] In Egypt, by

[39] Polybios 21.17.11; Livy 37.45.20; App. *Syr.*, 39; Antiochos was a hostage in Rome from 189 to 176.
[40] App. *Syr.*, 45, though Antiochos spent longer in the city than Appian implies.
[41] *OGIS* 248 = Austin 208.
[42] Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV*, 44–50.
[43] Sachs and Hunger, –175.

contrast, the result had been a regency of the Queen Mother Kleopatra Syra, then a continuing minority and rule by two unpopular and despised regents, spread over a period of ten years (180–170). However, in neither case was real stability the result.

In the Seleukid kingdom there was an obvious tension between the two Antiochoi, both of them kings, with Laodike possibly involved also, and no doubt there were still court factions. But at least the kingdom had an adult as king. Antiochos IV's position was paralleled by that of Antigonos Doson as king-regent for Philip V in Macedon, and there were other, earlier, parallels in Macedonian royal history. So Antiochos IV was perhaps seen by some as a regent for his nephew. Doson had died conveniently (and naturally) just as Philip V was reaching an age at which he could take over. If Antiochos IV was a regent, he should give way to his nephew about ten years ahead. But there was also Demetrios in Rome. Antiochos IV's position was not at all firm.

At Alexandria, on the other hand, the two regents were subject to other pressures. No doubt they were despised for their personal status. They would also be the more reviled for any lack of belligerence by those who considered it the first duty of a Ptolemaic government to recover lost territories, whether in the south or in Syria. It would be reasonable for a female regent, such as Kleopatra Syra, to pursue a policy of peace, particularly if supported by a court faction, such as those hostile to being taxed; it was much more difficult for male regents to act peacefully. Especially if one was a slave and the other a eunuch, it would be necessary for them to exhibit their power—the *macho* reflex. The result would be constant pressure to adopt a tough stand towards the outside world. Signs of instability in the Seleukid kingdom in 175 were no doubt seized on by the warmongering party in Alexandria as validating their advocated policy.

At a great festival held in Alexandria at some time between 174 and 172, Antiochos' envoy to the celebrations, Apollonios son of Menestheus, noted an atmosphere of hostility to his king. This would hardly persuade anyone that a war was intended, but it was a straw in the wind. Apollonios had been governor of Koile Syria under Seleukos IV and had held that position for a time under Antiochos as well,[44] so he was scarcely the most tactful envoy to be sent to Alexandria. There would never be any reason for anyone in Alexandrian official circles to be

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44 II *Maccabees* 4.21–22; Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV*, 68.

anything but hostile towards Antiochos and his envoy (at least after the death of Kleopatra Syra), and Eulaios and Lenaios no doubt dutifully echoed such sentiments; it did not mean they were planning war, but the prevailing sentiment might well have encouraged them to think it possible.

Antiochos' action in seizing the Seleukid throne had been one factor in shaping the reviving hostility in Egypt. It had also been an annoyance to Rome, for the new hostage in Italy, Demetrios the son of Seleukos IV, was now much less valuable—and as Antiochos IV and Laodike produced children, his value would constantly decrease.[45] Antiochos was king, Demetrios' younger brother was his heir, and Demetrios was thus now well down the list, whereas under his father he had been the heir of the kingship. The Senate had sent an envoy to see Antiochos IV in 174, which would be almost as soon as the news had arrived that he had made himself king, and was no doubt mainly investigative.[46] Antiochos IV had made an attempt to defuse any incipient Roman hostility by sending Apollonios as his envoy in return in 173. He took with him the arrears of the tribute his brother had owed to Rome, but such an action would scarcely persuade the Senate into friendship;[47] indeed it might be taken as a threat, an indication that the Seleukid kingdom had recovered from its defeat and was wealthy again.

Rome's relations with Perseus of Macedon deteriorated. Both sides angled for support among the other states in the eastern Mediterranean. Perseus asked Rhodes and Antiochos to join him—Antiochos being his uncle by marriage. Rome, more confident in its strength, sent an embassy to enquire about support throughout the region.[48] Rome was the more successful. Antiochos, despite his relationship to Perseus, was scarcely going to involve himself in a war in Greece while the court of the Ptolemaic kingdom on his doorstep was radiating a dislike amounting to hostility. This situation was also clearly evident to the Roman embassy, which did nothing to dissuade either side. It would be to Rome's advantage, when involved in the war with Perseus, to see the only other kingdoms in eastern Mediterranean with the power to intervene preoccupied with fighting each other.

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45 Antiochos and Laodike had at least one son and probably other children as well: Ogden, *Polygamy* 143.

46 Livy 42.6.12; Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV*, 44–50

47 Livy 42.6.6–10.

48 Livy 42.26.7–8; App., *Macedonian Wars* 11.4.

From the Roman point of view this was quite satisfactory. But such a calculation works both ways. In Antioch and Alexandria both governments saw the preoccupation of Rome and Macedon with each other as their own opportunity. It seems clear that when the Romano-Macedonian War began in 171 both the Alexandrian regents and Antiochos IV were seriously contemplating a war with each other.

Antiochos had been sufficiently concerned at Apollonios' assessment of the sentiment in Alexandria to reinforce the frontier with Egypt.[49] The regents in Alexandrian now aimed to recover Koile Syria, though any hope of recovering the Asia Minor territories was clearly impossible, for this would bring them into conflict with Rome, which had disposed of them at the Apameia conference, would not welcome anyone other than Rome itself altering the arrangement.

In the event of success it is unlikely that the two Egyptian regents would have been content with Syria alone. The destruction of the Seleukid kingdom, on the pattern of the actions of Ptolemy III in 246 may have been in their minds.[50] For the eventual result of Ptolemy III's actions had been the revival of Seleukid power and the loss of Koile Syria, and the only way to hold Syria was therefore to destroy the Seleukid kingdom permanently.

Antiochos may well have had a similar ladder of aims, the first step being a comprehensive defeat of the Ptolemaic forces, and successive steps would involve acquiring territories, though it is more likely that he was only interested at first in defending his kingdom. The final step in such a progress, of course, would be the annexation of the whole of the Ptolemaic state, though it seems most unlikely that he ever intended this. It is quite likely that he would have been content with reducing that state to a client status once more, as it had been after his father's victory, though this time with a more comprehensive scheme of control in place. On both sides, it is probable that their aims evolved over the period of the conflict, which of course meant that we know good deal more about Antiochos' intentions than those of the regents. And on both sides it is clear that the decisive impulse towards war was provided by the internal political needs of the rulers.

The emergence of yet another war between Seleukids and Ptolemies indicates that the political system of kingdoms which had been in place

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49 II *Maccabees* 4.21–22; this also follows from the events of the opening of the war, when Antiochos was quicker off the mark than the Egyptians (Porphyry *FGrH* 260 F 49a).

50 Diod. 30.16.

since the defeat of Antigonos Monophthalamos in 302 had at last become obsolete. Rome in its war with Macedon had finally lost patience and was evidently intent on that kingdom's complete destruction. The continued existence of the Ptolemaic and Seleukid kingdoms was also now no longer guaranteed. It had become clear that even the comprehensive defeat of Ptolemy V by Antiochos III had not extinguished the prospects of a further war; to the Ptolemaic government it was also clear that the strength of the Seleukid state clearly outmatched their's, so if they could win this war, it would be necessary to destroy the Seleukid kingdom as a political entity in order to safeguard the Ptolemaic kingdom. It was in the minds of both sides to ensure the destruction of the enemy kingdom just as Rome intended Macedon's destruction.

The priorities of both kingdoms had therefore changed in the two decades and more since the Seleukid conquest of Koile Syria, though Koile Syria was still at the centre of the relationship. So, even though the fighting now took place in Egypt, it is once more a 'Syrian' war. The Seleukids were now on the defensive, being the power in possession; the Ptolemies were the attackers. But at the same time both were uneasily aware of the looming and unpredictable presence of Rome. A new priority was, therefore, to try to understand, and perhaps predict, what Rome might do in particular circumstances. Rome's preoccupation with its own war against Macedon meant that it could not intervene further east, not even to make its own wishes clear to the protagonists. This preoccupation was one of the signals for the new Syrian war to begin.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# THE SIXTH WAR, AND THE 'DAY OF ELEUSIS'

The war between Antiochos IV and the Ptolemaic government which lasted from 170 to 168 is rather more complex than the earlier Syrian wars. This is partly due to the varied sources which exist (and 'varied' also implies 'better', but 'difficult' as well), partly to the actual complexity of events, and partly to the involvement of Rome. The complications begin with the very start of the war, who started it, and who attacked whom? Both governments sent envoys to Rome to explain themselves, and to seek support, and both accused the other of starting the war—yet it seems clear that at the time of these embassies there had still been no fighting.[1] The motives here were as opposed as the two states: Antiochos wanted Rome to stay out of the conflict; the Ptolemaic government, still headed by Eulaios and Lenaios, looked to Rome for protection and perhaps assistance, behind which victory could be gained, much the same policy as had been attempted in 188 at the time of the Apameian conference. In this, since Rome was now fighting a war against Perseus of Macedon, Antiochos had the advantage.

The regents in Alexandria, as noted in the previous chapter, had been preparing for the war for some time. This is not, of course, tantamount to actual war, nor does it make war inevitable, but being prepared does mean that it is much easier to begin the fighting suddenly. Yet it also means that the designated opponent will be warned and so will become prepared as well—hence Antiochos' reinforcement of his Syrian frontier in the immediate pre-war period. This was a less than provocative action, however; he had visited Joppa and Jerusalem, where the cities' defences were presumably inspected and improved; and he had concentrated his army in Phoenicia—that is, his forces were well away from the boundary; his preparations were conspicuously defensive. Ships were also being prepared and fitted out in the Phoenician cities.[2] This was all carefully designed so as to highlight the more active and aggressive preparations in Egypt. Antiochos' army was perhaps two weeks' march away from

1 Polybios 27.19 and 28.1.7–8 and cf. Walbank 3.321–324; Diod. 30.2.
2 II *Maccabees* 4.20–22.

Gaza, and a further week or more from Egypt's major defensive fortress at Pelusion near the Delta. The Ptolemaic forces, on the other hand, were gathered at and near Pelusion, only a few days' march from Gaza. Antiochos was positioning his forces more with a view to reacting to an Egyptian invasion than launching an invasion of his own.

Both governments, in the obvious understanding that war was approaching, took measures to strengthen their internal situations. Indeed, it is legitimate to wonder if the war scare was actually drummed up on both sides, partly in order to produce an atmosphere in which those internal measures could be implemented. A set of coins produced at the Antioch mint, and clearly influenced by Ptolemaic coins in their designs and weights, showing an eagle standing on a thunderbolt, heads of Sarapis and Isis. These coins were quite certainly intended for use in Syria, but their introduction has been attributed as a propaganda move by Antiochos to soften up the population as to his Egyptian intentions.[3] This assumes, of course, that he had specific intentions towards Egypt from early on—the coins were minted over a number of years. Instead, they may have been designed to appeal to the continuing residual Ptolemaic loyalty among some of the Syrian population, or merely to assist in commercial transactions. What seems clear enough is that the coins show a continuing concern with the Syrian-Egyptian relationship from soon after Antiochos' accession. This would be reasonable, for the continuing ambition in Egypt to recover Koile Syria had been clear ever since the last years of Antiochos III.

Antiochos' method of reaching the throne, by means of his armed *coup* against the regency of Laodike and Heliodoros, in defiance of the claims of his nephew Demetrios, meant that his seat on the throne remained unsteady. His son by Laodike was born in 173, and named Antiochos, so providing competition for his stepbrother, who now became much less necessary to the king's ambitions, though no irreconcilable steps would be taken until it was clear that the baby would survive. (There were thus three Antiochoi—the two kings and the new baby—simultaneously competing). Antiochos the king had also advanced his own claims above those of both his adopted son and his natural son, by claiming the title 'Theos Epiphanos', 'God Manifest'. This appears on his coins at about the time his son was born, and was clearly a political statement. This title was also, no doubt, a clear sign of the king's own ambition and self-esteem. Yet

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[3] O. Mørkholm, *Studies in the Coinage of Antiochos IV of Syria*, Copenhagen 1963, 20–23.

he still had to cope with a court which was divided: some, though perhaps not many now, were Heliodoros' former partisans, others took the part of his adopted son Antiochos (the son of Seleukos IV), though no doubt the majority were by now supporters of Antiochos the king. Laodike may have had her own partisans. Some certainly took Demetrios' part. So we may assume that tension existed among these groups or factions in the court. It was partly resolved in 170, when the son of Seleukos was murdered by Antiochos' orders.

The murder took place in August of 170, according to the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries,[4] which are quite explicit that 'at the command of Antiochos the king, Antiochos the (co-)regent, his son, was put to death'. By this time his own son, also Antiochos, was three years old, had survived long enough for it to be assumed he would grow to manhood, so the elder boy was dispensable. Yet it is unlikely to have been a simple case of the king preferring that his heir should be of his own family. Though no sign exists of it, we may assume that there had been agitation at court for the boy's rights as king to be recognized. He was ten years old by 170, and in three or four years he could be eligible for his adult rights to be recognized, and the coronation take place. If the agitation which I assume existed was loud enough, with the war with Egypt looming, King Antiochos could not risk a *coup* in the boy's favour in his rear while on campaign. And he knew about *coups* at court, having come to power as a result of two of them. It is impossible to disconnect the murder from the coming war; the boy was the first casualty.

Yet such a drastic action would never silence opposition, though it would probably redirect it. Those who had taken the boy's part had another figure to turn to: Demetrios, Seleukos' elder son, still living as a hostage in Rome. The king knew full well the unpleasant experience of such exile, but Demetrios was certainly not going to come back to Syria, even if the Romans let him leave, while his murderous uncle / stepfather was alive (though by now no doubt he was regarded as a useful card in the Romans' hand if they chose to play it against Antiochos). And Demetrios was quite certainly out of Antiochos' reach while in Italy.

In such a court situation, the prospect of a war against the old Ptolemaic enemy was perhaps a welcome prospect. A further consideration is that there was in Koile Syria still a sentiment in favour of Ptolemy and the restoration of Ptolemaic rule. There is a confused indication of this in

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4 Sachs and Wiseman, -170; 'Month V', which is 31 July to 28 August.

the work of the later commentator Porphyry,[5] but it is likely enough even without direct evidence. How powerful the sentiment was is unknown, though there seems to have been no active movement of 'resistance'. A victorious war against the Ptolemies might help quieten such disaffection, just as it might convince the nay-sayers in the court that Antiochos should be supported. Similarly the presence of such political supporters could only encourage the Ptolemaic war effort.

There were therefore a number of internal Seleukid factors favouring the intention of the Ptolemaic government to launch a war: some political support in Palestine and Koile Syria and Phoenicia, and possible disloyalty among some of the courtiers of Antiochos—the news of the murder of the boy king, with its implication of internal court disputes, can only have encouraged the Ptolemaic plans. Like Antiochos, the ambitions of the regents vaulted high. At the beginning of the war they addressed a meeting of Alexandrian citizens—at least, presumably Eulaios made a speech, since Lenaios as a former slave would hardly be accepted—and stated that their ambition was to recover the lost Syrian lands, and even perhaps to destroy the Seleukid kingdom.[6] In fact, of course, the second aim would in all probability follow on if the first was successful. Antiochos would be unlikely to survive defeat, and no adult Seleukid was immediately available to rally loyal forces. To safeguard Koile Syria in Ptolemaic possession in future it would clearly be necessary to destroy the possibility of a Seleukid recovery. The kingdom would need to be dismantled to achieve this.

The regents organized two dynastic celebrations, presumably as a means of rousing loyal enthusiasm for the planned war. In October 170 the joint rule of Ptolemy VI and Kleopatra II was replaced by triple monarchy, when their younger brother was added as a third monarch, Ptolemy VIII. They emphasized this by starting a new year count, so that 'the twelfth year (of Ptolemy VI) is also the first (of the three monarchs)'.[7] This did not last long, the new era of being overtaken by greater events, so it was presumably intended not only to mark the new set of monarchs, but also to be the year in which the lost province was

[5] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 49a.

[6] Diod. 30.16.

[7] Sorted out by T.C. Skeat, '"The twelfth year which is also the first": the invasion of Egypt by Antiochos Epiphanes', *JEA* 47, 1961, 107–112. The main discussion of these events is in W. Otto, *Zur Geschichte des Zeit des 6. Ptolemäers*, Munich 1934, though lots of extra minor details have emerged since he wrote.

recovered.[8] Then, not long after this proclamation, but probably within the same month, the eldest of them, Ptolemy VI, surnamed Philometor, celebrated his *anakleteria*, his coming-of-age.[9] That this was done with little notice is suggested by a reference in Polybios where the Akhaian League learnt that the ceremony had taken place, and so decided to send an envoy with congratulations;[10] a longer period of notice would have gathered a more impressive group of congratulatory guests to the actual ceremony.

This manipulation of the royal children suggests that Eulaios and Lenaios, who are credited with the responsibility for these moves, were being harassed by their own factions in the court. The three monarchs were aged between 16 and 10, old enough to have developed their own inter-personal relationships. It is evident that the two boys did not get along, but that the girl was able most of the time to reconcile them. They were also identified by courtiers as faction leaders. With the two boys at odds, it would not be difficult for courtiers to line up behind one of other of them, and to use them in the constant arguments and disputes which the regency of a former slave and a eunuch inevitably produced. It is noticeable that the enlistment of Ptolemy VIII (called Euergetes later), as joint king, was swiftly followed by the elevation of the elder boy Philometor by celebrating the *anakleteria*. The sequence looks very like a rather clever political manoeuvre to defuse faction fighting, but which left the elder boy, by now of age to give orders, more prominent. He was not, however, powerful enough yet to take control personally: Eulaios and Lenaios continued to direct affairs.

These events in Alexandria occurred before the war began, and appear to have been orchestrated as a preliminary to the launching of the invasion of Syria. Eulaios and Lenaios are described as gathering treasures to take with them to be used as bribes for opening the gates of enemy cities;[11] this made sense if there was a sufficiently large group of Ptolemaic supporters in Palestine and Phoenicia, and so a fairly widespread lack of enthusiasm for Seleukid rule. They may also have recalled how liable Ptolemaic commanders in the past had been to change sides; perhaps they assumed Seleukid commanders were just as prone to desert, though they never had been in the past. Polybios emphasized the inexperience

8 Mørkholm, *Antiochos IV*, 70.
9 Polybios 28.12.8–9.
10 Ibid.
11 Diod. 30.15–16.

of the two regents in military matters, but much of what they did seems quite sensible politically. It is highly unlikely that they could have commanded the army, and they had plenty of experienced officers to do that for them. Their basic trouble may well have been foot-dragging by those in the Ptolemaic administration who were opposed to their rule and so were liable to try to sabotage all they did. There must also have been officials who knew, or assumed they knew, enough about the condition of the Seleukid forces to be very skeptical about the ability of the Ptolemaic forces to win any fights.

As it happened the regents scarcely managed to get their army beyond the Delta before it met the Seleukid army and suffered a complete defeat. The battle, if such it was, took place it between Pelusion and Mount Kasios in November 170,[12] which is to say that the Ptolemaic army had marched out to invade Palestine, but Antiochos' forces had either anticipated it, or had marched more swiftly, and the fight took place in the Sinai desert, not far east of Pelusion. The Egyptian preparations had clearly taken far too long and had been too visible to be concealed (necessary, of course, in the Egyptian interest, in order to gain support). Meanwhile Antiochos had apparently been able to set out without the Egyptians noticing. For if Antiochos' invasion had been known before the Ptolemaic army set out, it would have remained at Pelusion, thereby forcing the Seleukids to camp in the desert and fight at the end of a difficult line of communications; at the same time Eulaios and Lenaios would have been able to point out, no doubt loudly and shrilly, that they had been attacked.

The Ptolemaic army, defeated in the fight, retreated into Pelusion and the Delta. Antiochos had conspicuously spared their lives, and now agreed to a truce. He had also brought up his ships, and managed to take Pelusion, by a ruse, according to Polybios, who disapproved; Antiochos is accused of acting as a 'pettyfogging lawyer' in insisting on the precise interpretation of the truce.[13] The criticism is, of course, the product of Ptolemaic propaganda; why Antiochos should not insist on the precise interpretation of the truce terms is not clear. It is not necessary to accept Polybios' characterisation without further details. He had in fact already held back his forces to spare the Ptolemaic soldiers;[14] he was not a bloodthirsty conqueror. The capture of the fortress was the crucial military event, for Pelusion was the gate into Egypt just as Gaza was the gate

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[12] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 49a; Mørkholm, *Antiochos IV*, 74, for the details.
[13] Diod. 30.18.2; the phrase is the translation in the Loeb edition; Polybios 28.18.
[14] Diod. 30.14

into Palestine. Holding Pelusion, Antiochos had easy and constant access to all Egypt. He moved on into the Delta immediately. For the first time since Alexander the Great, an army had successfully invaded Egypt.

Given the shaky foundations of the regency regime, it is not surprising that this defeat felled it. There is no connected account of what happened, but several elements are part of it. Eulaios attempted to persuade Ptolemy VI to leave Egypt, apparently to take refuge in Samothrace, but it seems that the plan was either not implemented, or was overtaken by events.[15] The idea is somewhat bizarre, but it may have been intended as protection for Eulaios himself, whose position was clearly undermined by the military defeat; it was also intended that the refugees should take a substantial treasure with them,[16] possibly that originally gathered for the purpose of bribing Seleukid commanders. This is, in fact, the last that is known of Eulaios, and Lenaios had vanished from our sight even earlier. The second item is the news that Komanos, the former conqueror of Ankhwennefer and the Theban rebel regime, and Kineas son of Dositheos, a cavalry officer,[17] both of whom were members of the Ptolemaic Alexandrian aristocracy, took over as the men in charge in Alexandria. That is, they carried through a *coup* to remove Eulaios and Lenaios—in the name of the monarchs, of course.[18]

This all took a considerable time. The battle in Sinai had taken place in November, and the new government took office at some time in the next couple of months. An ambiguous source suggests that Antiochos was at Naukratis about April 169—though it has a reference to 'the camp with the king', which is interpreted as applying to Antiochos, but it may also refer to Ptolemy VI.[19] It was during those months that Komanos and Kineas established their control in Alexandria and Eulaios and Lenaios were eliminated.

The new rulers, having gained power, also had to develop a plan of survival. This was put into effect when Antiochos reached close to Naukratis, the old Greek city about 100 kilometres upstream from Alexandria along the westernmost branch of the Nile, in a march which was clearly heading towards Alexandria. There is no account of events in Alexandria at this time, but a variety of political factions were in contention in the city,

15 Polybios 28.21; Diod. 30.17.
16 Polybios 28.21.
17 *Pros. Ptol.*, 270, 1833, 10087a, 14611 (Komanos), 1926, 14610 (Kineas).
18 Polybios 28.19.
19 Polybios 28.20.

all with varying opinions on what to do. The basic policy for all was to try to insure the survival of the Ptolemaic system, from which all members of the groups benefited. Their disagreements were at the level of tactics, though the swift defeat of the Ptolemaic army had clearly removed one weapon from their grasp. Once Antiochos began moving along the western distributary of the Nile, however, the threat was that he would directly attack Alexandria. He had already gained much of Lower Egypt, and the Delta, and by controlling the river he controlled the city's communications with the *chora*, whence came Alexandria's food, while his fleet could clearly be used to block access from the sea. Antiochos thus threatened to exert pressure by blockade and starvation. Once that became clear, it was necessary that whoever controlled the city had to take action.

The new regents formed a council of like-minded men, whom Polybios characterises as 'captains', so it would seem to have been a military *coup* which removed Eulaios. Two men, Tlepolemos and Ptolemaios, went from that council to negotiate with Antiochos. There was a considerable collection of Greeks from a variety of cities around the Aegean—the Akhaian League, Athens, Miletos, Klazomenai—who had arrived in Alexandria on a variety of errands and who all happened to be present in the city, and they were added to the delegation, presumably to help in the discussions, and to bear witness of the Ptolemaic government's good intentions.[20] These men all made speeches to Antiochos putting the Ptolemaic case for attempting to conquer Koile Syria, including the silly story that it had been part of the dowry of the dead Queen Kleopatra, all of which Antiochos answered patiently and persuasively. In his answers he succeeded in convincing the Greeks at least that he was putting a good case. The Alexandrian envoys blithely laid the blame for all that had happened on Eulaios, which is a good indication that he was either dead or gone by then, and emphasized Antiochos' relationship with Ptolemy—he was the boy's uncle. None of this was much use. Antiochos was convinced of the rightness of his cause in the war, in that he had been attacked; he had no interest in blaming anyone in Egypt, which was a matter for the Egyptians to deal with, and he had little on no family feeling for Ptolemy except in so far as he could be reduced to vassalage; after all, this was a man who had his stepson murdered only a few months before. He kept the Alexandrian envoys with him until his own people who had gone to

[20] Polybios 28.19–20; Tlepolemos (*Pros. Ptol.*, 50, 2180, 14634) may or may not be related to the regent of thirty years before; he can hardly be the same man, but could be his son or grandson.

Alexandria returned to him, so ensuring their safety, and he also got the Greeks to stay on with him as witnesses. (It was probably safer for them by now to be with Antiochos than to be in the city.) By this time Antiochos had gone beyond Naukratis and was advancing directly on Alexandria.[21]

Komanos' and Kineas' envoys therefore had little effect, though perhaps they had cleared the air a little, even through the clouds of rhetoric and propaganda the king had to put up with; at least everyone knew that Antiochos was basically reasonable and that he could be negotiated with. The two envoys Antiochos had sent to Alexandria, Aristeides and Theris, who had previously crossed with the Greek envoys, came back, having had a much more productive meeting, presumably with Komanos and Kineas, and they had arranged a meeting between Antiochos and Ptolemy VI. Since his coming-of-age, Ptolemy was technically responsible for the government. He had been in consultation with Komanos and Kineas and the governing council before, so this was presumably the next stage in the Ptolemaic attempt to get rid of Antiochos without having to fight again. The two kings met and reached an agreement, of which the terms are unknown, but which appear to have included Antiochos adopting a posture of protecting Ptolemy.[22]

This may be interpreted in several ways. It may have been merely a personal matter, since the meeting took place at Antiochos' military camp. It may have been something nebulous and vague, based on the kinship between them as uncle and nephew, which the Greek envoys had laid stress on at their meeting with Antiochos. Such a vague agreement might have suited both sides as a temporary position, but would scarcely produce a durable peace. And this emphasis on the kings' relationships is to sentimentalise the situation. Polybios more than once adopts this line, which so clearly serves Ptolemaic interests in the conflict that it must have emanated from Alexandrian propaganda. This was a war, after all, a political conflict, and there is every reason to interpret the events in a political way, even if a personal gloss was laid over it for public consumption. It is much more likely that the agreement involved Ptolemy submitting politically to his uncle's authority (thereby entering his 'protection'), and this is certainly the situation which obtained after the meeting. Antiochos, it must be remembered, could claim to have been attacked first, he had defeated the enemy forces, he had occupied

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[21] Polybios 28.21.

[22] The terms of any agreement the kings made are not known; the inference of 'protection' is that of modern interpreters, e.g. Mørkholm, *Antiochos IV*, 84.

a large part of the enemy territory, and the enemy king was now treating for peace in his camp. He was obviously entitled to state and enforce his own terms; Ptolemy, under no personal danger from Antiochos, clearly accepted them, having no real choice. The essential result was therefore the political subordination of the Ptolemaic king to the Seleukid king, though there is no suggestion that any Ptolemaic territory would be annexed.

Ptolemy may have been naïve, though his later career does suggest that he was as cunning and devious as most kings. He had, as it happened, plenty of cards to play in the negotiations, not least his control of the well-fortified city of Alexandria, and of the rest of Egypt from the Delta southwards. Antiochos had not, and probably could not at this time, occupy much more territory. It was clearly a situation in which the Ptolemaic side should play for time. Ptolemy could certainly have insisted on consulting with his royal colleague / siblings and the council in Alexandria before accepting any terms at all, but if he did want to do so, Antiochos refused to let him, and may well have insisted on a quick acceptance of the terms. Antiochos is said to have deceived his young nephew in all this, though all accounts of these affairs bear the blatant fingerprints of a pro-Ptolemaic interpretation. Why he needed to deceive the boy, and how he did so, is not stated, since reducing the Ptolemaic government to client status was presumably one of his professed war aims. It was, in fact, a return to the relationship between the kingdoms which had been established by Antiochos III when he gave his daughter in marriage to Ptolemy's father, and if the agreement had held it could have guaranteed peace between the kings of the lifetime of whoever died first. There was nothing deceitful here, and Ptolemy Philometor had no real cause for complaint.

Ptolemy VI certainly accepted the terms Antiochos presented. He perhaps assumed that Antiochos' support would enable him to establish himself fully in control in Alexandria and allow him to rid himself of his council (Komanos and Kineas and their supporters), and perhaps of his brother as well. At the end, when Antiochos had gone home to Syria, he could then escape from Antiochos' tutelage by claiming to have been deceived, or more likely just by allowing time to pass and conditions to change: a guaranteed peace may well have suited Ptolemy internally as well as externally. In Alexandria, however, all that was seen was that he had been reduced to a Seleukid client, and this was sufficient to rouse the Alexandrians. With their support the council was able to secure control of the city and repudiate Ptolemy's treaty. This involved repudiating

Ptolemy as well, since he had pledged his word in the treaty. The council therefore hoisted his younger brother to the position of sole king, along with their sister.[23] In this way, of course, the council—Komanos and friends—could retain power and its perquisites, whereas with Philometor backed by Antiochos they would probably have lost both.

Antiochos, however, will certainly have argued that it was reprehensible for the Ptolemaic government to reject the agreement and their king. Ptolemy had, after all, been crowned, deified, and declared of age. Technically he was fully entitled to agree to the treaty. Nor was it a particularly onerous one. The reaction of the Alexandrians was, of course, a legacy of Eulaios' and Lenaios' manoeuvrings over the kingship before the war, and Eulaios' extravagant promises of victory and spoils, but while Ptolemy VI was the senior king, his sister and their brother had been left in Alexandria. It may well be that it had always been in the minds of the senior councillors that these two could be used in place of Philometor if, say, Antiochos simply detained him. Perhaps Ptolemy VI also had the same thoughts. So another interpretation of these events is that this was a plot by the Ptolemaic government and the kings to snare Antiochos into overreaching himself. Certainly later the council and the family all found it remarkably easy to become reconciled once more. The Alexandrians' argument seems to have been that Ptolemy was being kept prisoner by his uncle, and so any agreement made between the two kings had been made while Philometor was under duress, and so it was illegitimate.

Foiled in the treaty, Antiochos moved to blockade the city. Despite its size, it contained large supplies of food.[24] The Alexandrian regime in the names of Kleopatra II and Ptolemy VIII sent an envoy to Rome, hoping for Roman intervention, and related heart-rending stories of the privations they claimed the citizens were suffering.[25] The Senate did appoint T. Numisius, a minor politician, to attempt a negotiation, but with no result.[26] Such an intervention could only be effective if the envoy was of sufficient status to carry full Roman support, and if he had serious military backing. Numisius had neither.

Antiochos attempted a half-hearted assault on the city—he presumably did not really want to conquer it, and probably did not have the armed strength to do so—and when that failed he returned to Syria

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[23] Polybios 29.23.4; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 2.7.
[24] Livy 44.19.9.
[25] Livy 44.19.6–12.
[26] Polybios 29.25.3–4.

leaving Ptolemy VI at Memphis in nominal charge.[27] After almost a year in Egypt, his own kingdom needed attention. There is some indication that there was trouble in Phoenicia, Arados being specifically mentioned.[28] Arados' history, as noted earlier, is mainly constructed from numismatic sources. In 171/170 Marathos, Arados' main *peraia* settlement, began issuing its own coins for the first time since the reign of Antiochos III, and this would indicate that Marathos was once more free of Arados' control, a change which can only have been accomplished by a royal decision, and the dating means that the change took place before Antiochos IV invaded Egypt. The reaction of Arados itself, already subjected to an unrequited raid from Egypt in 188, was probably to develop hostility to the king. Contact with the Ptolemaic regime in Cyprus, where a naval force was based, is possible. There is no sign that Antiochos was really distracted by all this while in Egypt—he obviously left a sufficient force in Syria to deter a Ptolemaic invasion by sea from Egypt or from Cyprus—but it was one more item to take into account, particularly since the Ptolemies were supposed to have had some residual support in the area of Phoenicia and perhaps Palestine.

A more persuasive element in pushing Antiochos to withdraw may have been the annual Nile flood, and the approach of winter. However, all these are peripheral reasons. The real reasons are that he was wholly unable to capture Alexandria, and with winter coming on it was time for him to return to Syria, to rest his army and to see if the treaty with Ptolemy Philometor could be made to work. The Babylonian Astronomical Diaries recorded that he 'marched victoriously through the cities of Meluhha (Egypt)' in month V, which is August/September,[29] and this was probably a victory parade designed to impress the Egyptians and those in Alexandria—and those in Syria—while he took his army home.

Ptolemy Philometor could plausibly make the case, if anyone asked, that the repudiation of his agreement with Antiochos by the council and his fellow monarchs amounted to a failure of ratification, and that Antiochos' withdrawal amounted to an acceptance of this repudiation. He used the autonomy he had gained to negotiate a settlement with his

[27] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 49b; Livy 45.11.1.
[28] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 56; this is a passage of commentary on a section of Daniel which would refer to an earlier part of Porphyry.
[29] Sachs and Hunger, −168.

brother, with their sister Kleopatra operating as a useful link. Indeed, this reconciliation was in progress even as Antiochos was withdrawing, and he did nothing to hinder it.

There was some fighting between the two Egyptian factions. A vivid papyrus fragment survives with a description of fighting somewhere near Pelusion, involving the storming of a palisaded town or city or camp by one side or another. Numbers of relatively important men were captured, some being released at once, either as part of the group who were cut off when they penetrated the palisade or amongst those outside who were taken by the cavalry.[30] One of the odd elements of this episode is that it is impossible from the papyrus to see who was on who's side. One man, Apollonios, is said to be 'Antiocheian', so presumably a supporter of Antiochos; the two others named as captured were on the same side, but were not of the Antiocheians; they are therefore of some other section temporarily attached to Apollonios' party, possibly they were 'Philometorians', possibly not. Since the victorious group (from whom the document derives) were harassed from Pelusion they were presumably anti-Antiochos, though who in Egypt they supported is not certain. One captive, Euphron, was released, the others being sent off 'downriver', which may mean Alexandria, and so we may perhaps identify the victors with the party of the council and the younger kings.

The interest of the letter is not so much in the detail it imparts, rather that it shines a light on the confusion and violence of the country, and on the divisions of the population of Egypt, in particular the Greco-Macedonian part of that population, though not exclusively. It is presumably a situation replicated elsewhere in Egypt, particularly in other parts of the Delta. Note also that Euphron, the man who was released, was the son and grandson of men with Egyptian names, and was released because of his father's services to the cause. But Euphron was on the other side—possibly a classic case of families divided in a civil war.

How widespread this confused fighting was is not known, but the possibility of a dissolution of the kingdom was clearly present, as was, no doubt, the revival of the native Egyptian insurrection.[31] Not surprisingly

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[30] *P. Koln* 4.186 = Bagnall and Derow 46; A.E. Hanson and P.J. Sijperstein, 'The Dossier of Euphron', *Ancient Society* 20, 1989, 133–143, and W. Clarysse, 'Hakonis, an Egyptian Nobleman and his Family', *Ancient Society* 22, 1991, 235–243, between them identify the family and their home.

[31] It is worth considering what might have happened if Antiochos III had invaded Egypt after his conquest of Palestine, while the Theban regime still flourished. He was always keen to reduce neighbours to subjects, and he would have pursued the same policy

the Ptolemies quickly reached agreement on the restoration of the triple monarchy, and Ptolemy VI returned to Alexandria; this was clearly the essential first move to re-establish calm. Antiochos probably accepted this; he must have known when he withdrew that the division of the country between two governments could not continue, and the agreement between the kings was under negotiation as soon as he withdrew. It was concluded, and the reunited government was in place, by October / November.[32] The agreement Antiochos had made with Philometor alone should also now apply to the united regime.

This, however, did not happen. Instead the restored and reunited regime in Alexandria attempted to hire, or borrow, more soldiers from Greece, and Antiochos came to understand that his primary war aim—to end the threat of an invasion of Koile Syria from Egypt—had not been achieved and that his secondary war aim—to plant his suzerainty over the Ptolemaic regime—had also been thwarted. That is, he felt he was just as much under threat of invasion in the spring of 169 as he had been in the autumn of the year before; and to this he could add a complaint of the bad faith of Ptolemy Philometor, though Ptolemy could plead that he was overruled by his two colleagues / siblings and his council. On top of this the Ptolemaic Cypriot navy had apparently been active during the time he had been in Egypt, and was now the most immediate threat to the Seleukid kingdom.

In the spring of 168, therefore, Antiochos' first move was to send a naval expedition against Cyprus. The Ptolemaic ships were defeated and the island was occupied. The governor, Ptolemaios son of Ptolemaios son of Makron (called Ptolemy Makron in *Maccabees*), surrendered fairly readily, and took service with Antiochos.[33] Once again the higher nobility in the Ptolemaic service was despairing of conditions in Egypt.

Antiochos, perhaps simultaneously with the conquest of Cyprus, marched against Egypt again. He had held on to Pelusion—this was one of the grievances which brought the two Ptolemies to agreement—and was therefore able to march on into Egypt without fear of being blocked by a Ptolemaic army. Instead he was met at Rhinokoloura, near Raphia,

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as his son (and as he did in marrying his daughter to Ptolemy V), but at the point of the sword at the gates of Alexandria. What a boost to Ankhwennefer such a conflict would have been! And if Antiochos had become involved in controlling Egypt, he would not have collided with Rome in Thrace and Asia and Greece.

32 Polybios 29.23.4; Livy 45.11.2–7.

33 Polybios 29.27.10; Livy 45.11.9; II *Maccabees* 10.12–13.

by a delegation from the joint monarchs, asking for terms. Antiochos had been down this road before, but at least this time he was dealing with the whole government. The stated terms were that he should keep Cyprus and Pelusion and the land around Pelusion and the Nile mouth in full possession. The possession of the Pelusion fortress would permit him to invade at will, and would clearly imply a continuing Seleukid overlordship of Egypt; possession of Cyprus might be seen as a punishment for Ptolemaic procrastination, as well as preventing further raids on Syria. The whole package implies a restoration and elaboration of the terms he had made with Ptolemy VI alone, and was designed not so much to conquer and raid in Egypt, but to ensure Ptolemaic compliance with the terms of peace, and to prevent Egyptian attacks on Syria.[34]

The Ptolemies were given a certain time by which to accept these terms. This actually suggests that Antiochos was suggesting negotiations, and therefore that the terms, including the land transfers, were negotiable. In turn this could imply that Antiochos was still seeking to prevent any more Ptolemaic threats to invade Koile Syria—the possession of Pelusion could be seen as protection for Syria as well as an open door into Egypt. He was, of course, always going to be disappointed, for no Egyptian government could afford to cede Pelusion, but if he could gain an agreement on any terms from these kings, he would be safe so long as all of them lived; since he was the older by a generation, he could assume the problem would be solved for him personally. The suggested terms almost begged to be replied to with a counter offer of lesser terms. There was, however, no answer within the time limit, and the Ptolemies thereby had rejected his terms entirely; the time limit he had set passed without a reply.

The Ptolemaic government was not in any position to resist Antiochos when he marched on into Egypt. The kings and the council must have known this. We have no information about the discussions which went on in Alexandria, but it is clear from the failure to respond to Antiochos' terms that there was agreement that his terms were to be rejected. It follows that they pinned their hopes elsewhere. The only source of such hope was Rome.

Antiochos now had to repeat his invasion of the previous year. He knew that the Romans had become involved, that the embassy of Numisius had been voted, and that another senatorial delegation was about to

[34] Livy 45.11.10–11.

be despatched. Both sides had had envoys in Rome during the winter, but the Romans did nothing effective to solve the war, no doubt because they were still quite happy to see the conflict in the east continue until they had finished their own war against Macedon. In this they were sensible; they knew of the longstanding connection between Seleukids and Antigonids, and Perseus of Macedon had made at least two attempts to persuade Antiochos to join him in fighting the Roman invasion of Macedon.[35] He was unsuccessful, but to Rome it must have seemed that the reason for this lack of success was as likely to be Antiochos' preoccupation with Egypt as his unwillingness to be involved in Greece. So the new senatorial delegation, led by C. Popillius Laenas, recently consul, with two lesser politicians, which was appointed by the Senate in January 168, sailed to Greece, presumably in the spring when the sailing season opened, and waited at Delos, involving themselves in the naval war against Perseus. They had been sent when it seemed to the Senate, whose information was well out of date, that Alexandria was in danger of being captured by Antiochos, as the Ptolemaic delegation had claimed; the news of his retirement in the autumn did not apparently reach Rome until after the delegation was appointed.[36] Once they reached the Aegean the senators discovered that Alexandria was not after all about to fall, so they waited in the Aegean to see if peace was made.

Antiochos' new invasion took place in the spring, and he quickly occupied Memphis and much of the Delta. At least one man was appointed as a local governor, Kleon (or Kreon) in Memphis; and Antiochos issued at least one official document as Egyptian king, in which he renamed the (very Ptolemaic) 'Arsinoite' nome the 'Krokodilopolitan'.[37] It is said that he 'received the kingdom in Memphis according to the Egyptian custom', which presumably means he was recognized as pharaoh by at least some of the Egyptian priests in the city.[38] The situation was clearly developing, and it is quite likely that Antiochos' intentions were changing as it

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[35] Livy 44.26.1–7.

[36] Livy 44.19.13–15; on the embassy see especially W.G. Morgan, 'The perils of schematism: Polybios, Antiochos Epiphanes and the "Day of Eleusis" ', *Historia* 39, 1990, 37–76; see also Gruen, *Hellenistic World*, 114–115; A. Lampela, *Rome and the Ptolemies of Egypt*, Helsinki 1998, 124–134; Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV*, 92–96; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 146–148; and for an older view, J.W. Swain, 'Antiochus Epiphanes and Egypt', *Classical Philology* 39, 944, 73–94.

[37] J.D. Ray, *The Archive of Hor*, London 1976, nos. 2 and 3; L. Mooren, 'Antiochos IV Epiphanes und das Ptolemäische Königtum', *Actes du XVe Congrès Internationale du Papyrologie*, vol. 4, Brussels 1978–1979, 78–84.

[38] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 49a–b.

did, just as they had the year before, and these measures could well have been deliberately provocative (like the demand for Pelusion), attempts to compel the Ptolemaic authorities, who by then were once more penned up in Alexandria, to accept these terms, or at least to begin serious negotiations.

Stubbornly the Ptolemaic council and kings failed to respond. Quite likely they knew by now that the Roman delegation was in the Aegean region and that it had been sent because Alexandria had been under threat the year before; therefore by enticing Antiochus onwards and refusing to treat until he threatened Alexandria again, they could expect the senators to turn up to save the Ptolemaic regime.

Sending the delegation meant that the Senate was putting the Ptolemaic regime under its protection. The choice was therefore Roman or Seleukid protection, and the Roman Senate's real interest in the affairs in the east was always poor and intermittent, as the Ptolemaic councillors must have realised; choosing Rome over on Antiochos was choosing a greater degree of political and diplomatic freedom. Antiochos perforce increased the pressure by allowing his army to loot, and it is to this part of the campaign that damage to a temple is to be assigned.[39] But this was a desperate measure by Antiochos. The government of Egypt was quite safe while it held Alexandria, for the city was as unwinnable in 168 as it had been the year before, both because of the inherent strength of the city, and because the Romans had shown they were not willing to allow it to fall to Antiochos—for if he did capture it, he would control both the city and the country, something the Romans clearly feared. No doubt Antiochos knew of the senatorial delegation and its mission, and expected its arrival just as did the kings and the council in the city. Antiochos clearly did not wish to simply leave Egypt, for this would seem like a Ptolemaic victory, if a defensive one, nor did he particularly want to have to govern the country. But a Roman intervention would permit him to withdraw with a good grace, and would prevent the Ptolemies from continuing the war.

So both sides waited, Antiochos for the Ptolemaic nerve to break, the Ptolemies for Antiochos to threaten Alexandria, and both for the Roman intervention which was the only thing which would save both sides, unless Antiochos was to conquer the city, which would probably provoke a Roman threat which he would be unable to evade. In the end Antiochos

[39] W.J. Rubsam, *Götter und Kulte in Faijum wahrend der greichisch-römisch-byzantinischen Zeit*, Marburg/Lahn 1974, 123.

succeeded. The Ptolemaic government in Alexandria was quite willing to see the *chora* wrecked rather than accept Seleukid suzerainty. Antiochos reached the city, failed in another attack, and soon Popillius and his fellow delegates arrived. In a scene justly famous in antiquity he pinned Antiochos down to an instant answer to the Roman insistence that he retire, by drawing a circle in the sand around him.[40]

Antiochos, of course, agreed, undoubtedly relieved that he was being extracted from the dilemma he had ended up in. He had gained his main point, for the Roman terms not only protected Egypt and Cyprus, and imposed peace on both sides, but thereby guaranteed that he would not be attacked out of Egypt again. Antiochos had to return the island and Pelusion, but he gained recognition of his family's possession of Koile Syria, both from Rome and from the Ptolemies. And he returned from Egypt with great quantities of loot, with which he could revive his treasury. He could regard the result as a victory. Egypt was much weakened, by his ravaging, by the humiliation of requiring Roman protection, and by being burdened by three rulers plus a council. Antiochos was safe from Ptolemaic attack for the rest of his reign. He had gained at least one of his main war aims.

[40] Polybios 9.27.5.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# MUTUAL TROUBLES AND A NEW AGENDA

The victory of Antiochos IV in Egypt in 168 had unsettling results in both kingdoms, though more so in the Ptolemaic state than in his own. Both dynasties had, by this time, quite separately from the repeated wars between them, reached a position when the occupation of the throne was in dispute, though in 168 the issue had become much more urgent in the Ptolemaic kingdom that in the Seleukid. These dynastic disputes were wounds which were self-inflicted in both kingdoms; but the problems they produced were magnified by the results of this latest war; and it was the internal dynastic disputes which eventually contributed very strongly to the next round of fighting.

The Sixth War had seen a clear escalation of the damage inflicted or intended by both sides. It had been the intention of the Ptolemaic regents to destroy the Seleukid kingdom. They may not have formulated their aim in quite those terms, but that would have been the necessary result if they had succeeded in repossessing Koile Syria (which would have included the re-acquisition of city of Seleukeia-in-Pieria). Antiochos IV had not at any time intended to inflict that sort of permanent damage on the Ptolemaic state—that is, it had not been his intention to annex the kingdom, beyond Pelusion, but, until the Roman intervention rescued him from the dilemma he had got into, that would have been the result of the invasions, given the obstinacy of the Ptolemaic government. Had Popillius Laenas not turned up, Antiochos would have had to besiege and capture Alexandria, and then either annex Egypt, for none of the Ptolemaic authorities was prepared to accept any lesser terms he might suggest, or establish a very close suzerainty over a rump royal government.

Popillius Laenas' achievement, therefore, had been to rescue both kingdoms from their war. By insisting on Antiochos' withdrawal he had preserved the Ptolemaic kingdom, but at the same time he had insisted that the Ptolemies recognize the reality and permanence of the conquest of Koile Syria. This was not done for altruistic motives, of course, but rather from a wish to maintain the separation of the two states. Rome had no wish to see them united into a single kingdom, which would make the joint state far too rich and powerful an entity, and so far too threatening,

for the Roman Senate to accept. And yet, another result of the Sixth War, precisely because such an outcome was so feared and forbidden by Rome, was to put that very idea on to the political agenda. The Ptolemaic regents had gone as far as intending the destruction of the Seleukid state; Antiochos, by his military triumph, had shown that the destruction of the Ptolemaic kingdom was possible; the union of the two was therefore quite possible. Given the obvious and overwhelming power of Rome, such a union was something both Seleukids and Ptolemies inevitably contemplated. From the time of the Sixth War onwards, therefore, the new agenda for the Syrian wars was precisely that: the union of the two kingdoms; it was also a policy against which others worked—notably, of course, Rome, but also more local elements in each of the kingdoms. It was the impossibility of recruiting all these participants into agreement which brought final destruction to the kingdoms.

For the present, immediately after the Seleukid withdrawal, the kingdoms turned away from their mutual antipathy and attended to their internal problems, which had been both inherited from the events before the war and aggravated by it. Egypt, still hardly recovered from the great native rebellions, had been further damaged by the two Seleukid invasions, by the civil strife ignited by them,[1] and was to be damaged still more by the distrust sown between the two kings. A joint monarchy was always liable to be difficult to operate, though many examples showed that it was perfectly possible, but the two kings began in mutual antipathy. Further both kings had had their brief periods of sole power during the war and it seems certain that both wanted to resume that position.

For a time after Antiochos IV's withdrawal, however, the kings were compelled to work together. No doubt there were pressures on them to cooperate, not least from their sister, who was almost a third joint monarch. Ptolemy VIII Euergetes was some years younger than his brother, and his period of sole kingship during the war had been even more nominal than that of Ptolemy VI. So real, visible, disputes between them did not arise until Euergetes was old enough, at about sixteen years (in 164), to act for himself.

Another factor in compelling royal cooperation was unrest in the *chora*, in which troubles in both Upper and Lower Egypt are known.[2] There are signs of trouble in the Fayum, the large reclaimed area thickly

[1] A decree of Ptolemy VI later refers to the 'great civil strife' of his 'year 12' (169): Sir R. Mond and O.N. Myers, *The Bucheum*, London 1934.

[2] Viesse, 27–45, details the numerous problems of the 160s.

settled by cleruchs, where a temple they used, which had been damaged during the war with Antiochos IV, was virtually destroyed in the 160s; in the same region a priest's property deeds were burned by 'rebels' in the same period.[3] For the kings the most serious problem was an attempted *coup* by one of their Friends, a man called by Dionysios Petosarapis, supposed to be an Egyptian, though this is not at all certain. (Sarapis was an essentially Greek god; the name 'Dionysios' suggests he was Greek). He attempted to aggravate the continuing tension between the two kings for his own purposes and roused the Alexandrian population, but he was foiled when the kings appeared together in public as a united force. He then left Alexandria for nearby Eleusis and roused the garrison there to support him, but was defeated. He moved on to the *chora* and roused a large group of local, Egyptian, supporters from the population.[4] At that point our source ceases, but since Dionysios is no longer heard of, he was presumably crushed by royal, loyal forces.

The trouble at the temple of Ammon in the Fayum may have been due to the disturbances associated with Dionysios' operations. There were other troubles at Herakleopolis, on the edge of the Fayum, where a soldier attempted to usurp ownership of some property,[5] and in the Thebaid. These outbreaks may not all be directly connected to each other, or to the activities of Dionysios Petosarapis, but they were surely in part the result of the ravaging and costs of the preceding war. Perhaps most dangerous to the royal regime was the new outbreak of trouble in the south, which had been the centre of the independent native kingdom and was obviously not reconciled to Ptolemaic rule. As Diodoros says 'an urge to revolt swept over the people'.[6] This produced rapid action by Ptolemy VI Philometor, who swiftly suppressed the rising in the Thebaid region, though he had to besiege the town of Panopolis for some time. This had perhaps been the real centre of the trouble. The town stood on a tell made up of several thousands of years of remains, making it eminently defensible. When it was taken the revolt was ended.[7]

Philometor returned to Alexandria a victor over both Dionysios and Panopolis, and so with considerably enhanced prestige. By vigorously suppressing rural dissent he will have secured support from those whose

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3 *P. Tebt* 3.68; cf. McGing, 'Revolt Egyptian Style', 289.

4 Diod. 31.15a; *Pros. Ptol.* 2158, 14600 (Dionysios).

5 *P. Gen.* 128.2–10.

6 Diod. 31.17b.

7 Viesse, 39–45; McGing, 'Revolt Egyptian Style', 29; J.D. Ray, *The Archive of Hor*, London 1976, 1–6.

lands and rents had been threatened, in particular the Alexandrian aristocracy. At the same time such increased support was a threat to his brother, or at least so his brother might have thought. Dionysios Petosarapis had tried to persuade Euergetes that Philometor was trying to have him killed, and the suspicion in Euergetes' mind may well have been nourished by the spectacle of Philometor's victorious return. What exactly happened is not known, but Euergetes executed a *coup* at Alexandria and expelled Philometor[8]—possibly preparing it during Philometor's absence while he was suppressing the revolt in the south. The latter first went to Rome and then to Cyprus, which seems to have been held for him all along.[9]

This highlighted yet another legacy of the war. In order to survive, so they thought, the Ptolemaic rulers had repeatedly appealed for Roman assistance and protection during and even before the war, and the curious scene at Eleusis, where Popillius Laenas had theatrically compelled Antiochos' immediate accession to his terms, gave the impression that Rome had indeed been the saviour of the Ptolemaic dynasty (ignoring the fact that Antiochos had never shown any intention to suppress the Ptolemaic kings). But this factor then entailed a constant temptation to appeal to Rome whenever the regime faced a problem, though the Senate did little to assist seriously. Philometor was soon restored to Egypt, but he did so largely by his own efforts, for Euergetes quickly made himself thoroughly unpopular in Alexandria. The kingdom was divided between them: Euergetes ruled in Cyrenaica and Philometor in Egypt and Cyprus. Euergetes was never satisfied and repeatedly attempted to get a larger share of the kingdom.[10] Once again the impression arose that Rome had had a hand in working out an Egyptian problem, even though the solution was essentially contrived in Egypt itself and Rome's interference was essentially passive.

The Seleukid kingdom by this time was also in deep trouble, similarly as a result of the recent war. An internal dispute within Jerusalem had erupted into fighting between Jewish factions in the city while Antiochos IV was in Egypt on his first campaign in 170/169. One faction in the city had been pro-Seleukid ever since the conquest by Antio-

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[8] E. Lanciers, 'Die Alleinherrschaft des Ptolemaios VIII in Jahre 164/162 und der Name Euergetes', in *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology*, vol. 2, Athens 1988, 405–431.

[9] Diod. 31.18.

[10] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 183–184.

chos III; their opponents, who had won the contest in the city, were therefore easily portrayed as pro-Ptolemaic, though they did not hanker for a restoration of Egyptian rule, so far as can be seen. When Antiochos returned from Egypt late in 169, he naturally turned to deal with the apparently pro-Ptolemaic regime which had become established in Jerusalem, just as he had dealt with the factional problem in Arados two years before. This involved some fighting to retake the city, which produced a large number of casualties. Antiochos, no doubt thoroughly annoyed by this time, finished the job by allowing his army to loot the city and then confiscated the temple treasure, said to amount to 1800 talents.[11]

Antiochos had been nervous about his control of Koile Syria even before the war. A pro-Ptolemaic sentiment had been present among the population since his father's conquest, and the raid by the Ptolemaic Cypriot fleet in 188 had affected matters in Phoenicia. The city of Arados was notoriously independently-minded, and had been deprived of its *peraia* in 171 / 170; the other Phoenician cities might be considered to be similarly anxious for more autonomy, which, as in Jerusalem, might be portrayed by their opponents as in favour of the Ptolemies. So an apparently pro-Ptolemaic uprising clearly required condign punishment, just as the Egyptian risings and riots and rebellions were put down with considerable violence by the Ptolemaic government.

This did not end the trouble, however, because, whatever the king might think or had been told, the rising in Jerusalem was not really one which was either pro- or anti-Seleukid; it was mainly an internal dispute within the Jewish community. Antiochos' violent reaction therefore had the effect of uniting some of the Jewish factions against the Seleukid government, and a low level rural uprising followed, in which the small number of active fighters was able to count on the general sympathies of the wider population.

The initial policy pursued by Antiochos made the situation still worse, for his campaign seemed to its victims to be directed against the Jewish religion. The rural guerrilla war therefore gained increasing support for the Jewish intransigents, whose leadership was assumed by the old priest Mattathias and then by his sons, collectively called the Maccabees. They defeated and killed several local governors, but it was not until the middle of 165 that the problem directly involved the governor of

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11 I *Maccabees* 1.16–24.

Koile Syria, who was Ptolemy 'Makron', the former Ptolemaic governor of Cyprus. However, Ptolemy's first effort, by which he sent a small army to deal with the issue, also failed. By this time the rebellion had become an embarrassment, and soon the central government in Antioch was involved.[12]

The rebellion in Palestine was therefore not seen as important or threatening by Antiochos for several years, and may well have been only one of several risings in various parts of the kingdom. Both the Ptolemaic and Seleukid governments were facing similar problems. The financial pressures of the recent war may bear a good deal of the blame: the Seleukid ravaging and looting of Egypt was complemented by the royal theft of treasure from the Jerusalem temple; this was exactly what Antiochos III had done at Ekbatana in his first expedition to the east, and was attempting to do in Elymais when he was killed.

The Sixth Syrian War had other effects in the rest of the Seleukid kingdom. Just as the overbearing Ptolemaic government provoked repeated Egyptian rebellions, so the measures Antiochos IV had to take to hold his throne produced rebellions by its continuing alienness and financial greed. In the far east the elaborate system of alliances and agreements organized by Antiochos III in 210–207 had partly survived under Seleukos IV, during whose reign the Baktrian king Demetrios had raided into India, but by the 160s the arrangement had wholly collapsed. One group in particular, the Parthians, were now under a new king, Mithradates I, who had ambitions to extend his lands.[13]

King Antiochos staged a great victory celebration in Antioch in 166, displaying his forces and his wealth before a huge invited audience from all over the Greek world (except Egypt, presumably). He put on a display of his army, 46,000 infantry, 9500 cavalry, elephants, chariots, and gladiators. Taking into account other units still in garrison in other parts of the kingdom, this amounted to an army at least as numerous as that which had fought at Raphia or Panion, despite the loss of the

[12] I am not concerned here with the internal development of the Jewish community in Palestine, only with the effect of the rebellion on the Seleukid state in its relationship with the Ptolemies. This whole matter has been the subject of innumerable studies, of course, which has tended to inflate the importance of these early events; in fact the only uprisings were of little importance: I *Maccabees* 1.1–6; II *Maccabees* 4–13; Jos., *AJ* 12.5.1–9.2; Jerome, *In Dan.*, 11.29–30; Schurer, *History*, vol. 1, ch. 4; cf. also W. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, trans. J. Bowden, London 1974.

[13] N.C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago 1938; E. Wolski, 'Arsaces II et les généalogies des premiers Arsacides', *Historia* 11, 1968, 138–145; B.P. Lozinski, 'The Parthian Dynasty', *Iranica Antiqua*, 19, 1984, 119–139.

manpower of Asia Minor. If this was an imitation of a Roman triumph (to outdo that which Aemilius Paulus, the conqueror of Macedon, had staged in Macedon itself the year before)—or of the Alexandrian *pompe* of Ptolemy II a century or more earlier—it was followed by a 'civilian' procession displaying the kingdom's wealth in gold, ivory, sacrificial animals, and so on, which was designed to outshine anything the Ptolemaic regime ever did. All this was clearly a victory celebration, and it was so understood by the guests and spectators. For those paying attention Antiochos was also indicating quite clearly that he felt he had won the war in Egypt.[14]

Antiochos, after 168, could be confident that he could attend to distant problems without having to concern himself with any threat from Egypt. Like his father after the defeat at Raphia in 217, or in 195, the treaty he had agreed with the Ptolemaic kings was a protection for both kingdoms. After his great victory celebration, therefore, he set off to campaign in the east, presumably with the ambition of restoring his father's diplomatic and strategic system. (Note also his effective dismissal of the problem of Judaea by ignoring it.)

Before he set off, he received an embassy from Rome, led by Ti. Sempronius Gracchus.[15] It was disturbing to the Senate that Antiochos IV was friendly with Eumenes of Pergamon, who had assisted his original *coup* against Heliodoros. Having struck down Macedon, the Senate, or at least some of the senators, now needed to see what the political situation was further east. No doubt the information that Antiochos was intending to campaign in the east was reassuring; Rome would not need to worry about him when he was in Iran. Later events do suggest, however, that the Senate, or at least some of the senators, were convinced that his success in Egypt, plus his probable success in the east, was making him too powerful. He may have seemed to be a revival of his father.

Also before he set off Antiochos made careful provision for the kingdom's government while he was on campaign. He reverted to a version of the old system set up by Seleukos I when he appointed his son as joint-king. Antiochos IV himself was going to rule the east, and so he left his chief minister, Lysias, to deal with the government of the rest of the kingdom, including the tiresome insurgency in Judaea. He promoted his son, only eight years old, as joint king, and left him with his mother at Antioch

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14 Polybios 30.25.1–26.9; cf. Walbank 3.448–453.
15 Polybios 30.27.1; Diod. 31.17.

under Lysias' tutelage.[16] During his absence in the east, from mid-165 to late 164, this worked well. But late in 164 Antiochos IV unexpectedly died.

A successor king, and a functioning government, was already in place in Syria. Lysias performed his task well, first in the name of the absent Antiochos IV, and then in the name of his son Antiochos V. He grappled with the Judaean problem following the defeat of Ptolemy Makron by bringing a large army to the area. This so overawed the rebels that they entered into negotiations. Lysias guaranteed freedom to the Jews to worship as they wished, and gave up supporting Antiochos' imposed candidate as high priest; in return the rebels ceased fighting and accepted a new nominee of the government for the position of high priest. The news of the death of Antiochos IV arrived in the midst of the negotiations (allowing the Jews later to claim he died in agony as a punishment for fighting them), but Lysias was the man in control, and the same terms were agreed in the name of Antiochos V.[17]

In his expedition to the east, Antiochos began with an intervention in Armenia. The local king, Artaxias, had originally been made governor (*strategos*) by Antiochos III, but had effortlessly made himself king in the north of the country when Antiochos was defeated by Rome. He was reduced to submission, but stayed in post.[18] Since the other Armenian king, Zariadris, ruled the southern part of the country, it is reasonable to assume that he had submitted also, for Antiochos would have had to cross his territory to reach Artaxias' kingdom. Antiochos then spent much of the year 165 in the lands around the Persian Gulf.[19] In 164 he moved on into Elymais,[20] but later in the year, in November or December, he fell ill and died, apparently at Tabai in central Iran.[21] These at least are the events we know of, though he also spent some time in Babylonia.[22] He refounded the city of Antiocheia Charax at the southern end of Babylonia, in the region called Mesene, no doubt as a suitable base for the continuing Seleukid naval domination of the Persian Gulf. It looks as though

[16] II *Maccabees* 9.21–25; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 32.13.
[17] II *Maccabees* 13.1–26.
[18] Diod. 31.17a; App. *Syr*. 45–46; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 38.
[19] Pliny, *NH* VI.138–139, 147 and 152; Mørkholm, *Antiochos IV*, 167–170.
[20] Polybios 31.9; App. *Syr*. 66; Jos. *AJ* 12.358–359; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 53 and 56; Mørkholm, *Antiochos IV*, 170.
[21] Polybios 31.9; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 56; for the date, Sachs and Hunger, 209.
[22] Pliny *NH*, VI.15; the Astronomical Diaries for 165–164 are only fragmentary, but the king is certainly mentioned more than once; of course, he had to travel through Babylonia to get to the Gulf.

he was moving fairly slowly eastwards sorting out local issues as he travelled. His ultimate aim was perhaps to re-establish the political balance in Central Asia, which had been upset by warfare and political revolutions since the time of Antiochos III's eastern expedition twenty years before.

Antiochos' provisions for the succession worked for a time after his death. Lysias was involved in the campaign he had launched to suppress the Maccabean uprising for some time. The army in the east was brought back to Syria by Philip, a commander who claimed to have been appointed as regent by the dead king to replace Lysias. He was in possession of the king's ring, diadem, and robe. Undistracted by this threat Lysias quickly made his successful peace in Judaea, then returned to Antioch where he met and bested Philip without difficulty, his control of the boy king easily overcoming the inanimate possessions of Philip.[23] But Lysias was obviously in a weakened situation, and was now compelled to act as host to yet another Roman embassy.

The Senate had been alerted to the situation by an appeal by the Seleukid prince Demetrios to be allowed to return to Antioch to claim the throne. This was refused, but a new delegation of three senators, Cn. Octavius, Sp. Lucretius, and L. Aurelius, was sent to exert Roman pressure on the regent. Perceiving the weakness of the regime, the Senate instructed the envoys to see to the destruction of much of the Seleukid fleet, and the killing of the military elephants. This was ostensibly in the name of enforcing the provisions of the treaty of Apameia of 188, but neither Antiochos IV nor his son were bound by that treaty; the Senate was actually responding to the fright administered to Rome by Antiochos' great display in 166.

The death of Antiochos IV, of course, had ended the Egyptian treaty, and it was highly unlikely that Lysias would embark on a foreign adventure—the lesson of Eulaios and Lenaios was very recent—but Egypt was still weak and distracted—Philometor had finally returned to Egypt the year before—and the existence of a mature and capable adult Seleukid in Demetrios was clearly alarming. More cynically, it is clear that the Senate deliberately took advantage of the relative weakness of the Seleukid state to destroy part of its military strength. The report of Ti. Sempronius Gracchus after his tour of the eastern Mediterranean in 165 and his meeting with Antiochos IV will have noted that Antiochos' power was overwhelming when compared with that of all his neighbours.

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23 I *Maccabees* 6.14–16 and 55–63.

The ships were burnt, the elephants hamstrung, as a result of which they died slowly. The spectacle outraged many Seleukid citizens, one of whom, Leptines, took the opportunity of finding Octavius defenceless in a bath at Laodikeia-ad-Mare to stab him to death.[24] The senators did nothing to avenge their envoy, which rather suggests he may have gone beyond his instructions,[25] but they will have viewed with some satisfaction the panic into which the deed sent Lysias' government.

Lysias was regent for a child, Antiochos V, who was ten years old in 163. As with all regents he had to spend much of his energy simply holding on to his position. This was a situation the Roman Senate found worth continuing, hence the refusal of the Senate to allow Demetrios to return to Syria. The Senate in fact refused permission twice, so he organized his own escape (thereby, of course, demonstrating that the Senate's refusals were, at least in Roman eyes, justified). One of those involved in this was the historian Polybios, who was a client of the powerful Scipionic family and faction; it seems unlikely he would have acted without at least a nod and a wink from his patrons. Another man involved was Demetrios' own boyhood tutor, Diodoros, who had been sent to Syria to investigate conditions, and who could assure Demetrios that the regency government was thoroughly unpopular.[26] A further participant was Menyllos of Alabanda, who was an envoy in Rome of Ptolemy VI Philometor. Demetrios and Philometor knew each other from the latter's sojourn in Rome four years before, and were friends. It would seem, therefore, that not only did Demetrios have a substantial body of support in his homeland, even after an absence of well over a decade, but that he had covert support from a large part of the governing class in Rome, despite the Senate's formal refusal of permission for him to leave, and he had the agreement of Ptolemy Philometor that it would be better for Demetrios to be in power in Syria than Lysias.[27] Perhaps Philometor was concerned that Lysias would make a bid for popularity by launching a foreign war, like Eulaios and Lenaios.

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[24] Polybios 31.2.9–11; App., *Syr*. 46.

[25] Gruen, *Hellenistic World*, 127–128.

[26] This is not, of course, evidence of its actual unpopularity; only that Diodoros and Demetrios were determined to justify their adventure. This may be the occasion for the manufacture of a coin in the name of Antiochos IV's second son, another Antiochos, at Ptolemais-Ake: A. Houghton and G. Le Rider, 'Le deuxième règne d'Antiochos IV à Ptolemais', *Schwiezer Numismatische Rundschau* 64, 1985, 73–85.

[27] Polybios 31.2.1–8; App. *Syr*. 46–47; Justin 34.3.6–9; I *Maccabees* 14.1–2.

This would suggest that the two men had done more than just chat to each other when they met in Italy. Menyllos in particular would not have assisted in Demetrios' escape from Italy without express permission from Philometor. Egypt was not in such a powerful position that Philometor could afford to be faced by a Seleukid king who was both powerful and hostile. The kingdom with Lysias in charge was clearly unstable, and it would be several years before Antiochos V would be old enough to take charge of the government himself. Egypt's recent history had shown just how irresponsible and dangerous an unstable regency government might be, and Philometor knew all too well the difficulties faced by a child king, both in surviving and in gaining control of his inheritance. His agreement with Euergetes put the latter in Cyrenaica, an uneasy situation all too reminiscent of the kingship of Magas in the same area a century before. If Euergetes could not be persuaded to be friendly, then Philometor could instead hope for a friendly ruler in Syria, and a friendly and controlling king in Antioch would be a stable neighbour for him.

In the same way it would be advantageous for Demetrios to know that he was not under threat from Egypt while he was establishing himself in power. The diplomatic situation was, after the death of Antiochos IV, open to a further Syrian war, if either king wished it. Advance agreement between the two men on maintaining peace would leave both kings free to concentrate on their immediate internal problems. And it is the case that, for the first time since Seleukos I, two kings of the rival dynasties showed no hostility towards each other for almost a decade after the enthronement of one of them. This was clearly not a treaty in the conventional sense, since when the two met neither was a king in power. But each seems to have trusted the other for some time, and so Menyllos was free to assist Demetrios.

There were, of course, deeper and darker considerations. Philometor will have understood that Demetrios was likely to incur some Roman enmity as a result of his clandestine escape. The Senate had already interfered in Syria by making an agreement with the Maccabeean rebels and by Octavius' brutal disarmament measures. The message to the Maccabees rendered no actual assistance to the rebels, and had had no effect on the policies of Antiochos IV or Lysias, but it may have given the rebels some much-needed international credibility and some confidence.[28] When Philometor was restored to Alexandria in 163 he

[28] I *Maccabees* 8.17–32.

soon found that he fell foul of Rome by resisting a further division of his kingdom in favour of his brother—and Philometor's case in arguing against it was presented in the Senate by Menyllos.[29] Once in power therefore the two kings were similarly disliked by Rome for their defiance, and the Senate was encouraging enemies of both of them—Euergetes and the Jews. Mutual dislike of Rome pushed the two kings into a friendship which might evolve into mutual political support.

Demetrios succeeded rather more quickly in establishing himself as king in Antioch than might have been expected. He landed at Tripolis, in northern Phoenicia, and found that the news of his arrival brought instant support.[30] The soldiers in Antioch arrested Lysias on hearing of Demetrios' arrival, an action which looks as though it had been prearranged. They sent Lysias and the boy Antiochus V to Demetrios, who ordered that they be killed at once, before he saw them.[31] The killing of the boy was perhaps a mistake, though from Demetrios' point of view he was a usurper and it is probable that, had he been left alive, he would have become a focus for his enemies and for constant trouble within the kingdom. (Demetrios will have understood this from the contemporary experience of Philometor, who was beset for the rest of his reign by Euergetes' pretensions, and by Antiochos IV's elimination of Demetrios' own younger brother.) But the killing of the boy did give at least one governor, Timarchos of Miletos in the eastern provinces, an excuse to rebel on his own behalf. He proclaimed himself king, and gained some sort of recognition from Rome.

He had certain advantages, in that the eastern provinces contained a substantial fraction of the Seleukid armed forces, since it seems probable that more troops than usual were left there as a result of Antiochos' recent expedition. Timarchos was also hoping that Demetrios' usurpation of the throne and killing of Antiochos V and Lysias had sapped the usual sources of Seleukid control. The politically aware population may well have been sufficiently confused and alienated from the Seleukids as a result of the internal family murders to turn to a non-Seleukid king. Timarchos found, however, that as soon as Demetrios marched against him his support faded away.[32]

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[29] Polybios 31.10.1–10.

[30] I *Maccabees* 7.10.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Diod. 31.27a; App. *Syr* 47; A. Houghton, 'Timarchos as king in Babylonia', *Rev. Num.*, 21, 1976, 212–217.

Timarchos' adventure, nevertheless, was a sign that the Seleukid dynasty needed to work to regain its authority. It had nothing in the way of a divine sanction to support it, though Antiochos III had made serious efforts to boost the religious dimension of the dynasty's authority. Popular dislike could easily lead to popular revulsion, which opened the clear possibility of the removal of the dynasty. Timarchos had had no greater success than had Molon, and less than Akhaios, but all three showed that the real basis for Seleukid power was the army.

Demetrios was kept fully occupied with reaching the kingship and dealing with Timarchos until 160. He also had to cope with new trouble in Judaea. The settlement arranged by Lysias broke down, and the situation again developed into fighting. Demetrios appointed a new governor, Bakchides, and sent an army, under the command of Nikanor son of Patroklos, who had been involved in Lysias' earlier campaign and had assisted in Demetrios' escape from Italy: he therefore had local experience of the situation in Judaea and the confidence of the king. He could hope to achieve a new settlement, but he was faced with intransigents who were determined to fight, perhaps in the hope that some Jewish martyrs and a blundering Seleukid military occupation would stimulate local support. Led by Judas Maccabaeus the guerrillas were successful in a minor fight, and Nikanor in his anger threatened the priests in Jerusalem. It is likely that he had expected to negotiate rather than fight, as Lysias had done. He withdrew northwards, but was attacked at the Beth-Horon Pass which leads from the Judaean plateau down to the plain towards the sea. Judas' men were victorious, and the victory was proclaimed as one over the Seleukid army, though it was probably no more than a detachment he had been fighting. Nikanor died in the fighting, so Judas had gained time to turn back to Jerusalem where he asserted his control.[33]

Demetrios, the new king, necessarily had to respond very quickly to this disaster, which was much more significant than the defeat of the minor governors in Antiochos IV's reign. He sent another army—presumably by reinforcing the troops formerly under Nikanor—and Bakchides now took direct command. This time the size of the Seleukid army, and the fact that it marched successfully up to the Judaean plateau by an unexpected route without meeting an ambush, was decisive. By threatening Jerusalem and conducting the ravaging of the countryside

[33] I *Maccabees* 7.1–50; II *Maccabees* 14.1–15.37; Jos., *AJ* 12.10–13.1.

which was normally indulged in by all Hellenistic armies in hostile territory, Bakchides compelled Judas to dance to his tune.

Until this confrontation, Judas had been a guerrilla leader, able to conduct small fights, employing lightly armed soldiers who could fade away to hide among the population at will. Now that he was in effect the governor of Judaea, which he became by seizing Jerusalem and restoring worship in the temple, Judas had acquired the responsibility for defending his land and his people. Bakchides cleared recognized this change in his enemy's circumstances, and, having climbed to the plateau he was able to dictate the terms of the fight. Judas was compelled to attempt a formal battle, and failed completely, dying along with his troops in a futile attack on an overwhelming force.

Bakchides eliminated as many of Judas' surviving followers as he could reach, and, having established the pro-Seleukid party in power in Jerusalem, retired. He did not reach all of the Maccabees, and perhaps he did not really want to. Judas' next brother, Jonathan, became the leader of the survivors, operating more as a bandit than as a political leader for several years. He was no more than a rural fugitive, and his people constituted no threat to Seleukid control.[34]

The significance of this revolt—which lasted only a third of the time (168–160) of the Egyptian revolt in Thebes a generation before—has been vastly exaggerated by historians using hindsight, and assisted by the unusually rich, if extremely tendentious, sources. At the time it was of little importance. After Antiochos IV's early involvement it was always left to lesser political figures to deal with it, and as soon as the uprising reached the stage of controlling any real stretch of territory it became vulnerable to the normal Seleukid military efforts, and was then crushed, at first by Lysias and then by Bakchides.

Its real political significance, therefore, is in its failure. By making a direct military challenge to the Seleukid state the revolt was doomed. The same had happened with Timarchos' attempt to make himself king: as soon as his pretensions reached that stage, he became vulnerable to the 'Seleukid effect', which had so aided Antiochos III against Molon and Akhaios, in that Seleukid subjects would not fight the rightful king, and even after eliminating Antiochos V, Demetrios was recognized as the king by right of inheritance. Elsewhere, in Seleukid north Syria and in Koile (south) Syria, more effective and lasting methods of secession than

[34] I *Maccabees* 9.1–57; Jos. *AJ* 13.37–41; Bar-Kochva, *Seleucid Army*, ch. 16.

those of Timarchos and the Maccabees were being used. In the north, in Kommagene, the long valley of the Euphrates River leading through the Taurus mountain range towards Armenia, the governor Ptolemaios, in office from 163—and so appointed by Lysias—survived there for a full generation. It is unlikely he took office with the intention of becoming an independent ruler, but by the time he died, in about 130, he was so firmly in power in his local area that he was able to hand on his office to his son.[35] His geographical situation, controlling the main route from Syria north into Armenia, meant that the Armenian kingdoms slid once more into independence, if they have not already done so in the aftermath of the death of Antiochos IV.

Antiochos had adopted a policy of allowing many of the cities of his kingdom to issue coins in their own names. This new policy was enthusiastically taken up by many of the cities in the Syrian region. Several cities in Kilikia, the four great cities of the Seleukis, and a string of cities along the coast of Phoenicia all produced coins in their names. Some, such as Seleukeia-in-Pieria and Antioch and Ptolemais-Ake were already royal mints, and now added municipal issues to their official coinages. The incidence of the new mints is an indication of the economic vigour of the Syrian-Phoenician-Kilikian region, but it is also an indication of the local political pride in those cities. This is especially noticeable in Phoenicia, where the new coinages were maintained over a longer period and in greater quantity than anywhere else. These cities adopted their own types as well, whereas those in northern Syria tended to use the same type, one which was a particular favourite of the royal mints.[36]

The result of the new minting policy therefore was an enhancement of local pride and authority, since the coins were issued by the municipalities who appointed or elected officials to oversee the work. The prominence of the Phoenician cities in this is worth noting. It complements the long and obvious ambition of the city of Arados in northern Phoenicia to enhance its local autonomy. This was thus clearly an ambition shared by the other greater Phoenician cities, notably Tyre and Sidon, an ambition not reduced by their long subjection to the Ptolemaic and then to the Seleukid kings.

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[35] Diod. 1.19.4; H. Seyrig, 'Sur quelques ères syriennes, 1: l'ère des rois de Kommagene', *Rev. Num*. 4, 1964, 51–55; R.D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Commagene', *ANRW* 2/8, 1977, 792–798.

[36] Mørkholm, *Studies*, *passim*; and *Antiochos IV*, 111–130.

All of this—the Judaean rebellion, the slow separation of Kommagene, the growing assertiveness of the Phoenician cities—can be traced in its origin to the actions of Antiochos IV, first by his usurpation, which destabilized the dynastic succession, then by his Egyptian war, which destabilized the international situation, then by the murder of his nephew, then by his monetary policy, which encouraged much more local pride, and so at least potentially tended to destabilize the internal situation in the kingdom. All this was then followed by the usurpation of Demetrios, and his killing of his half-brother. The overall effect of these policies and their results was to reduce the authority of the king and the dynasty. Until Antiochos' return to Syria in 175 there had been no serious disunity in the Seleukid dynasty (except for the occasion of the dispute over the succession in 246–244), and no usurpations which had taken effect, as against the direct hereditary inheritance of the eldest son of the king. The actions of Antiochos in seizing the throne, in excluding the rightful heir (Demetrios), and in murdering the proclaimed king (his nephew Antiochos) helped to destroy the prestige of the dynasty, no matter how dazzling his own performance was, and his subsequent actions and policies may be seen as attempts to secure the support which he had forfeited by that usurpation. Demetrios' actions only made the matter worse.

Antiochos IV's Egyptian war magnified the dynastic problem by its effects on the internal situation in the Seleukid kingdom. In Arados, for example, Antiochos reduced the city's territory while his policy of permitting local coining enhanced its autonomy. And it was in part as a result of the Egyptian war that the Judaean revolt developed (though it did not originate in any connection). By the time Antiochos died, still relatively young, it was impossible to distinguish the various strands of the overall problem, and Demetrios, long resident in Italy, was hardly up-to-date on the local situation in Syria. He acquired a kingdom which could be said to be in the midst of a slow crisis affecting its very existence.

The continuing disputes within the Ptolemaic house, which went on simultaneously with those in the Seleukid, was more directly a result of the Sixth War, or at least of the determination of the regents of the kings to launch that war. Both dynasties were now, for the first time, stained by murder and usurpation and internal factional disputes, with the inevitable result that the respect they had attracted and the authority they had commanded were both significantly reduced. Into this difficult situation Rome repeatedly meddled, for the very good reason that it was in Rome's interest to see these powerful states weakened. For the

moment, after 162 the relationship between Demetrios I and Ptolemy VI Philometor was friendly enough to deflect this interference, and to allow them to establish their own authority firmly enough at home to deflect their internal rivals.

In their foreign relations Philometor proved to be more adept and accomplished than Demetrios, though, once in control of their home governments, both kings were able to conduct independent foreign policies with little or no regard for Rome. For example, Rome expressed the opinion that Euergetes should be better provided for, but he could never use this, except for a brief acquisition of Cyprus in 154;[37] Demetrios was able to intervene in Asia Minor affairs without Rome paying any attention.[38] Well out of Rome's view Philometor was able to extend his control of the south, first into the Dodekaschoenos and then on into the next section of the Nile Valley southwards, the Triakontoschoenos (the 'Thirty-Mile region') between the first and second cataracts.[39] Demetrios was successful in suppressing the Judaean rebellion, though another Maccabee, Jonathan, maintained a shadowy existence in the countryside, without much influence, and this despite the apparent 'recognition' of the Maccabean regime by Rome.[40]

Demetrios was, however, unconcerned about his eastern territories. By 160 he had defeated the attempt by Timarchos of Miletos to take the kingdom, and he does not seem to have left Syria afterwards. Part of the reason must be the turmoil in eastern Iran, where the Greek Baktrian kingdom was involved in fighting in India, in defending itself against nomad attacks, and in civil warfare. All this made it a threat to its neighbours in India and Parthia, so its neighbours were wholly engaged in averting that threat.[41] The Parthian kingdom had been much reduced in size by Antiochos III, but was now reviving under Mithradates I, though its first priority for the time being was defence against Baktria. Several minor provinces were taken over by the Parthians, which expanded the kingdom eastwards and into the lands south of the Caspian Sea.[42] In the rest of Iran the areas with aspirations to independence—Elymais, Persis, Media

37 Polybios 33.11.4–7.

38 Diod. 31.32–34; App., *Syr.*, 47; Justin 35.1.2–4; Polybios 32.5.2–3 and 34.24–25.

39 L. Torok, 'To the History of the Dodekaschoenos between ca. 250 BC and 298 AD', *ZAS* 107, 1980, 76–86.

40 I *Maccabees* 9.73; Jos., *AJ* 13.35.

41 On this cf. A.K. Narain, in *CAH* VIII. 402–403, for a minimalist view of the Indian campaigns.

42 N.C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago 1938, 21–23.

Atropatene, were apparently quiet. The expedition of Antiochos IV had shown the continuing power of the Seleukid kingdom as far as eastern Iran when the king chose to exert it.

The friendship between Demetrios and Philometor postulated for the 160s could scarcely survive their occupation of thrones of kingdoms which were so fundamentally opposed. There is no reason to suppose Philometor had given up the Ptolemaic ultimate aim of recovering control of Koile Syria—indeed the next war demonstrated that the ambition was alive and well. Demetrios therefore had to be on his guard, and the mutual suspicion which then replaced the personal friendship was a revival of the condition of inter-war intrigue. One basic factor was that the two kings were wholly free of any treaty restraint, and apparently made no attempt to make a new treaty. This situation was of advantage to Philometor. He knew that his kingdom of Egypt was in no danger from Demetrios, who followed his uncle's policy and never showed any intention of trying to invade it; the distant protection of Rome, even a Rome generally uninterested in the east, was sufficient.

This meant that Philometor was free to conduct his foreign policy without much danger. He could campaign deep into Nubia without having to guard his back against a possible Seleukid attack (though Euergetes, a constant threat, was another matter); and he could conduct anti-Seleukid intrigues. Demetrios, on the other hand, could not be sure he would not be attacked if he went off on a distant expedition. This must be one of the reasons he ignored the east, where it should have been possible to restore Seleukid power in the face of the local turmoil. It did not, however, prevent him from active diplomacy and intrigue any more than it did Philometor. After 160, therefore, we can see a steadily rising drumbeat of sub-*bellum* conflict, which eventually, when Rome was fully preoccupied in its own troubles once more, broke out into open warfare again. Two issues in particular were involved: Cyprus and the Seleukid succession.

Cyprus was one of the main bones of contention in the Ptolemaic contest between Philometor and Euergetes; it had also been one of the prizes of which Antiochos IV had been deprived by Popillius Laenas at the end of his Egyptian war. It was here that the *entente* between Demetrios I and Ptolemy VI broke down. In about 154 Demetrios contacted, or was contacted by, a man called Archias who may have been the governor of Cyprus for Philometor.[43] It is not clear who initiated the contact. It seems

[43] Polybios 33.5.1.

unlikely that Demetrios would do so, since he would know well enough that any such intrigue would inevitably bring Philometor's enmity; on the other hand, he may by this time not have cared if Philometor was annoyed. Cyprus, of course, was a particularly sensitive matter. Possessed by Philometor, it had been adjudged to Euergetes several years before by the Roman Senate, but not delivered.[44] Euergetes maintained his claim, of course, and when in 156 he escaped an assassination attempt he concocted a will purportedly leaving 'the kingdom belonging to me' to Rome, and at the same time he went off to Rome to accuse his brother of authorizing the attempt.[45]

It was soon after this, probably in 154, that Archias and Demetrios made contact. They agreed that, in return for 500 talents, Archias would deliver the island to Demetrios. Our sources for this are three small extracts in Polybios which have been preserved in the *Suda*, a Byzantine encyclopedic compilation.[46] The extracts are so brief that they leave wide open the many possibilities in the situation. Even the date is unclear. It is quite possible that the Cypriots encouraged Archias in his scheme. The shadow of Euergetes, a vindictive, cruel, and unpleasant man, lay over the island. In 164/163 he had quickly made the Alexandrians angry enough to expel him, and had faced a rebellion already in Cyrenaica, and it may have been Cyreneans who had staged the assassination attempt which sent him to Rome and provoked him into making his strange will. A year later the Cypriots resisted for perhaps a year Euergetes' formal acquisition of the island. The prospect of exchanging the relatively benign rule of Philometor for that of his unpleasant brother was not a cheerful one for them, and they made it quite clear that they objected. This is part of the background to the pact of Archias and Demetrios.

The ownership of Cyprus was thus somewhat uncertain, and it may be this which lay behind the strange attempt by Demetrios to buy it. He may have felt that Philometor, who was at odds with his brother, and who had been, at least technically, deprived of Cyprus by the Roman judgment, would not have objected to the island's transfer. And since the Roman judgment was in fact enforced about the same time, when five envoys,

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44 Polybios 31.17.1–18.5.

45 *SEG* IX.7; A. Laronde, *Cyrène et la Libye hellénistique*, Paris1987, 440–442 = Austin 289

46 Polybios 33.5.1–4.

each in a quinquereme, were sent to install Euergetes there,[47] it may be that Demetrios was reinforced in that assumption.

It did not work. The transaction was revealed before Demetrios could take over the island, Archias was detained, accused of treason, and committed suicide before his trial.[48] Then the Romans installed Euergetes, but Philometor confined Euergetes to the city of Lapethos, which he besieged;[49] Euergetes finally gave in and went back to Cyrenaica; Rome did no more for him. The interference of Demetrios in the whole affair can only have annoyed everyone else involved. Philometor, who had ignored the Syrian issue so far, now apparently decided that his forbearance with regard to Demetrios had been for nothing. He enlisted himself into a wider international conspiracy designed to remove the Seleukid king.

Demetrios had thus collected an impressive set of enemies. He was disliked at Rome. He had alienated the Kappadokian king Ariarathes V, who had been involved a dispute with his brother Orophernes, and Demetrios had supported the pretender to such effect that he replaced Ariarathes for a time. The dispute went to Rome, where the Senate instructed that the kingdom be divided between them. This, not surprisingly, was not implemented, for both wanted all. King Eumenes of Pergamon then took a hand and restored Ariarathes by force. Orophernes was given refuge in Antioch.[50]

Now Demetrios had also alienated Ptolemy Philometor over Cyprus, and King Eumenes over Orophernes and Kappadokia. He also had been unable finally to stamp out the Judaean revolt, though it had been reduced to Jonathan's minor banditry, and at least one minor governor, Ptolemaios of Kommagene, was more or less independent. And there was also a chieftain in Rough Kilikia, Zenophanes, whom Demetrios had annoyed.

Antiochos IV had been sponsored in his usurpation of the throne by Eumenes II of Pergamon, and the two had apparently maintained good relations until Antiochos' death. Eumenes was succeeded by his brother Attalos II in 159, and meanwhile the removal of Antiochos' line by Demetrios had already severed the link between the two kingdoms.

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[47] Polybios 33.11.5–7.

[48] Polybios 33.5.1–4.

[49] Polybios 39.7.6; Diod. 31.33.

[50] App., *Syr.*, 47; Polybios 32.22.4, 24 and 3.5.2; Diod. 31.32b and 34; Livy, *Periochae* 47; Justin 35.1.2.

Demetrios' interference in Kappadokia in the 150s had made relations worse. In fact the Pergamene king apparently had already decided that, if one usurpation had succeeded, then another might do so as well, and over the next years the accumulation of Demetrios' enemies gradually got together; a conspiracy was formed.

Attalos located a young man who greatly resembled Antiochos IV, and whom he promoted as Antiochos' son, called Alexander. The truth of the boy's ancestry and parentage is now undiscoverable, but it is quite plausible, and was certainly accepted by many people at the time, that he and his sister, called Laodike, were children of a second wife, or a concubine, of Antiochos IV. Of course, they were condemned as imposters by Demetrios, but they were accepted as legitimate heirs by Demetrios' enemies. It has been suggested that their mother was a concubine of Antiochos' called Antiochis, to whom he had assigned substantial revenues in Kilikia.[51] Since all parties to the dispute were directly involved, their assertions cannot be accepted at face value; and yet others did accept the pretensions of the two.

Eumenes groomed the young man and his sister and installed Alexander with a chieftain called Zenophanes in Rough Kilikia as a pretender to the Seleukid throne, and spread the word through Syria that he existed.[52] This did not have much effect until Demetrios annoyed Philometor over Cyprus, though it presumably annoyed Demetrios, and it is evident that he was unable to do much about it. It is to be emphasized that what Demetrios did over Cyprus was not an act of war, but one of those intrigues which were always being undertaken by both sides in the continuing Cold War between the dynasties which the wars repeatedly interrupted, and which dated back to the time of Ptolemy I and Seleukos I. The *detente* between Demetrios and Philometor did not stop such activities. Philometor now indulged in an intrigue which was also well short of open warfare, though it was in the end a good deal more effective than Demetrios' grasp for the island.

The various rulers around the Seleukid kingdom now formed a coalition against Demetrios, though first they had to free themselves of other complications. Attalos was fighting a difficult war against Prusias of Bithynia, which may have been instigated by Demetrios, or at least

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[51] II *Maccabees* 4.30; Ogden, *Polygamy*, 143–144: 'the weight of the evidence is on the side of Balas having been at any rate a blood son of Antiochos IV'.

[52] Diod. 31.32a; for an extended, if dated, review, cf. H. Volkman, 'Demetrios I und Alexander I von Syrien', *Klio* 19, 1925, 373–393.

encouraged by him, for he was certainly the main beneficiary; Philometor was involved in Cyprus for a year or so after Euergetes' attempted installation by the Romans, expelling Euergetes and calming the island down.

By late 153, all these problems were removed, at least temporarily, and the conspirators turned to deal with Demetrios.

The first essential was for them to acquire validation for their intentions from Rome. The boy Alexander and his sister Laodike were taken there by Herakleides of Miletos, a former treasurer of Antiochos IV who was the brother of the failed rebel Timarchos, defeated and killed by Demetrios. Presented to the Senate, the two were greeted with some skepticism and with no real interest, though Alexander made a good personal impression. Herakleides could vouch for their relationship and parentage, but his family enmity towards Demetrios vitiated his claims; this is the sort of difficulty which every item of the sources regarding these two demonstrates. Of course, at this distance it does not really matter, though it would be good to know the truth. The really important thing is that it was in the interests of Eumenes, Ptolemy, Zenophanes, Herakleides, and others to accept their identification as children of Antiochos IV. For the Senate, similarly, the truth was irrelevant. What was of most importance was the potential Alexander had for disrupting the Seleukid kingdom; one wonders if the various anti-Seleukid participants understood that this same procedure could be used to harm each of them. (As, of course, it was to be in the Pergamene and Ptolemaic kingdoms, and in Roman Macedon in the next two decades.) In the end a majority of the Senate agreed that Alexander should be king, but no one in Rome was going to do anything active to achieve this.[53] This, however, was all that the conspirators required, for they were fully prepared to act themselves. Returning to the east, Alexander was landed at Ptolemais-Ake in Palestine and proclaimed as king.

Alexander is not credited with commanding any forces when he landed, nor is it explained how he got to the city. When he did get there, however, he very quickly persuaded the Seleukid garrison in the city to come out in his support.[54] It thus seems highly unlikely that he had arrived alone and unexpectedly. If Attalos was following the procedure of his brother when he had assisted Antiochos IV to reach Syria, he will have certainly provided Alexander with a force of mercenary soldiers,

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[53] Polybios 33.15 and 18.6.

[54] Polybios 33.15.1–2 and 18.6–12.

whom he no doubt paid for. This force needs to have been of some size, certainly large enough to persuade the garrison of Ptolemais-Ake that they could risk rebelling against Demetrios. A little later, when he had control of that garrison, Alexander's forces were big enough to persuade the several garrisons in Judaea to evacuate and move off to the north.[55] He must by that time have had an army of several thousands of soldiers, who were no doubt mercenaries. This therefore raises the question of finance. Attalos had sponsored Alexander in his Kilikian lair, which was hardly an expensive matter, but it probably took Ptolemy Philometor's wealth to hire an army large enough to challenge the Seleukid king.

Alexander arrived at Ptolemais-Ake from overseas, and so by ship, or rather ships, if the argument of the preceding paragraph is accepted. He would need a small fleet to transport an armed force of the size we have to assume was needed to persuade the men in Ptolemais-Ake to join him. Attalos certainly had a small fleet, and these ships could have come all the way—perhaps from his newly founded city of Attaleia in Pamphylia—but it is more likely that the ships were provided by Philometor, and that Alexander arrived from either Alexandria or Cyprus. Philometor still controlled three posts in the Aegean, at Itanos in Crete, the island of Thera, and Methana in the Argolid, with which he obviously remained in contact by ship; and he had by this time recovered full control of Cyprus, where a detachment of the Ptolemaic navy was always based—just across the water from Kilikia, where Attalos had installed Alexander years ago. Any of these places would be ideal for gathering a mercenary force quietly, and to any of them Ptolemaic ships could go without attracting much attention. The language of I *Maccabees* certainly makes it seem that Alexander's arrival at Ptolemais was unexpected by people in the Judaean hills, though in the city itself the situation was no doubt different.

It is, however, one thing to assume that Alexander arrived in command of some basic force of soldiers and ships, and quite another to account for his rapid early success. He clearly had no difficulty at Ptolemais-Ake, which implies that the ground had been prepared in advance of his landing. This is where the participation of Philometor in the plot is relevant, since there were probably still some Ptolemaic sympathizers in Palestine. It is said that Demetrios was unpopular, and that he secluded himself,[56] but a good deal more is required to make a whole garrison of soldiers, previously loyal, change sides to support a boy branded as

[55] I *Maccabees* 10.1

[56] I *Maccabees* 10.7–14.

an imposter, and previously barely known, except as a bandit in the Kilikian hills, and certainly untried in any real political and military sense. Alexander's sponsorship by Philometor and Attalos was no doubt known, especially if he was carried by Ptolemaic ships and accompanied by mercenaries, but this would not necessarily be a popular background for Seleukid soldiers. We must assume that the garrison at Ptolemais had been seduced from their allegiance before Alexander arrived. And the basic reason for their willingness to rebel against Demetrios must be the previous conflicts and murders inside the Seleukid family. There was certainly a considerable number of Demetrios' subjects who regarded him as an usurper, and therefore prepared to accept Alexander as the legitimate king.

The man responsible for this was probably Herakleides. He had been a major political figure in the Seleukid kingdom under Antiochos IV, and had no doubt kept up his contacts. Also he could quickly organize an administration for the new king. The possibility of investigating attitudes to the Seleukid government by an agent had been demonstrated in the 160s by Demetrios' man Diodoros;[57] presumably the same sort of preliminary soundings had also been arranged for Alexander. Since Alexander had been promoted as a pretender to the Seleukid throne for seven or eight years before his invasion, there had been plenty of time for all these arrangements to be made.

Demetrios reacted quickly, by collecting his army and marching south from Antioch.[58] Since he presumably had the greater part of the Seleukid armed forces under his command—I *Maccabees* calls it a 'huge army'[59]—it is curious that he felt he needed to make an offer to the current Maccabee chief, Jonathan, buying his support with offers to release hostages held in Jerusalem and giving permission for Jonathan to raise his own army.[60] This suggests that the balance of forces between the rival kings was already much more even than might be expected, for Jonathan's military strength was minor, and consisted only of light forces. Alexander riposted by offering Jonathan still more, including investiture as high priest in Jerusalem.[61] Demetrios is said to have replied with still more

[57] Jos., *AJ* 13.36; Diod. 31.32a; Justin 35.1.5–8 is fairly confused, but does suggest exasperation with Demetrios (also 36.1.1).
[58] Polybios 31.12.
[59] I *Maccabees* 10.2.
[60] I *Maccabees* 10.2.
[61] I *Maccabees* 10.6–8.

offers,[62] but these are so extravagant that they are generally disbelieved, and indeed it was said that Jonathan did not accept the offer. Further, all this is known only because Jewish sources report it a generation later, when myths had had time to accumulate. If Alexander and his advisers felt the offer of the high priesthood was suitable this implies that they understood that Jonathan had sufficient support in Judaea to produce an effect on the balance between the rivals. Conversely the competition for Jonathan's support suggests that the Jews of Judaea had largely swung round to support the Maccabees since the death of Judas in 160. That is, it was not military support Jonathan could offer but the control of a substantial territory in the Judaean Hills, from which he could menace anyone in the surrounding lands, and through which a friendly army could march.

What other political manoeuvres the rivals undertook in other parts of the kingdom is not known, but Alexander was able to mint coins in Tyre, Sidon, Berytos, and Askalon during 151/150;[63] combined with Jonathan's influence in Judaea, and his own control of Ptolemais-Ake, it seems that Alexander had gained control of the old Ptolemaic province of Koile Syria almost at once. It does not seem extravagant to assume Ptolemaic royal influence at work, particularly as Ptolemaic influence has been detected in the coinage which Alexander issued.[64]

From this base Alexander, having recruited more mercenaries, and called up men liable to serve the Seleukid king in arms, advanced northwards. He now seems to have been left to fend for and organise himself, his sponsors not caring to involve themselves directly in the civil war. Their purpose, after all, was not necessarily to favour and promote Alexander as ruling king but to weaken the Seleukid state, and a continuing civil war would do this very nicely. The details of the fighting are unknown. One source speaks of two battles, the first a victory for Demetrios, the second for Alexander.[65] Josephus, on the other hand, describes a single battle, though he may simply be reporting the decisive fight.[66] Certainly a lot of detail has been lost, for the civil war lasted well

62 I *Maccabees* 10.18–20.
63 I *Maccabees* 10.22–47.
64 E.T. Newell, *Late Seleucid Mints in Ptolemais-Ake and Damascus*, Numismatic Notes and Monographs 24, New York 1939; id., *The First Seleucid Coinage of Tyre*, Numismatic Notes and Monographs 10, 1921; H. Seyrig, *Trésors du Levant, anciens et nouveaux*, Paris 1973.
65 Justin 35.1.10.
66 Jos., *AJ* 13.58–61.

over a year. Alexander landed in Ptolemais-Ake in 152,[67] but the decisive battle described by Josephus did not happen until 150.[68] There had clearly been more campaigning, manoeuvring, and negotiating than we know of. The competition for Jonathan's support culminated only in late 152, for the Feast of Tabernacles, in October 152, was when he became high priest.[69] In the final battle the left wing of Demetrios' army defeated part of Alexander's, but his right was beaten by Alexander's forces. Demetrios became separated from his troops and was unhorsed in a swamp, where he was unable to move. Seeing his plight enemy soldiers concentrated on him. Once surrounded by his enemy's troops, of course, he was effectively dead, since Alexander would kill him even if he survived the battle.[70]

Alexander's victory was followed by a purge. His chief minister was Ammonios, who was probably, judging by his name, from Egypt. (Herakleides disappears.) He organized the killing of Demetrios' widow Laodike, who may have been also his sister, and so the daughter of Seleukos IV who had earlier been married to Perseus of Macedon. Demetrios' eldest son Antigonos was also killed, and those of the former king's Friends who could be reached as well. But Demetrios had already removed two other sons, Demetrios and Antiochos, from Syria before his defeat.[71] Ammonios' purge was therefore not definitive.[72]

No doubt to the surprise of himself and his patrons, Alexander therefore emerged as king during 150. Ptolemy Philometor took swift advantage. He agreed to give his daughter Kleopatra Thea to Alexander in marriage.[73] She was the second daughter of his marriage to his sister Kleopatra II, the first daughter (Kleopatra III) being reserved for her brother when he inherited the Ptolemaic throne. Philometor's agenda here is very obvious. He could now act as Alexander's protector, and the Seleukid kingdom had thereby become a Ptolemaic client; hence the employment of Ammonios close to the king, Alexander being notoriously lazy and pleasure-loving. Ptolemy's intrigues had effectively reversed the verdict of the Sixth War without involving him in a new war.

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67 I *Maccabees* 10.1: 'year 160' by the Seleukid count was probably spring 152.

68 Alexander was safe enough on the throne for Ptolemy to give him his daughter in marriage in Seleukid year 152 (150 BC): I *Maccabees* 10.57; Jos. *AJ* 3.81–82.

69 I *Maccabees* 10.21 (October 152).

70 I *Maccabees* 10.48–50; Jos. *AJ*. 13.58–61.

71 On the names of these princes, see J.M. Helliesen, 'Demetrius I Soter: a Seleukid king with an Antigonid Name', in H.J. Dell (ed.), *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki 1981.

72 Livy, *Periochae* 49.

73 I *Maccabees* 10.54–58; Jos., *AJ* 13.80–82.

Ptolemy would know that this was a situation which would involve him in further actions. It seems probable that here we can see the ambition of Philometor expanding as he sees the possibilities of the situation. There seems little doubt that Philometor's ambition was now to restore as much of the old Ptolemaic empire as possible. His internal policies had succeeded in imposing a better government on Egypt than at any time in the past half-century, he had extended his control southwards along the Nile Valley as far as the Second Cataract, along the region called the Triakontoschoenos, at the expense of the Meroitic kings; he had held on to Cyprus despite pressure from his brother and Demetrios and Rome, and despite the treason of Archias. He had done all this by a careful mixture of intrigue and force. His ultimate purpose in Syria was undoubtedly by now aimed at recovering Koile Syria for himself and his dynasty, using the same methods.

Demetrios I's surviving children had been sent to live in Asia Minor. The elder, Demetrios, went to Knidos in Karia.[74] This was usefully distant from Alexander's lands, but was especially well placed for him to recruit a mercenary army from among the Ionian cities, Aegean islands, and Crete. Antiochos, the younger son, eventually lived in Side in Pamphylia, very close to Kilikia, but this is only attested later; it is likely that he was further away from Syria and its murderous court at first. Both boys very noticeably kept clear of the lands of Attalos II, and of each other. Demetrios, though still only in his early teens, was soon working to hire soldiers with a view to returning to Syria to claim his inheritance, though it does not seem that Antiochos supported him at the time, probably being too young to take part.[75]

This was, of course, an ideal situation for Philometor. Alexander was the occupant of a throne which was clearly unsteady; he had gained it more because of Demetrios I's unpopularity and lack of support in Syria, the decisive arena, than due to his own abilities, which were clearly limited. The intentions of the younger Demetrios in Knidos were undoubtedly well known—hiring mercenaries, which he was doing within a year of his father's death, was a very public business. Meanwhile, Alexander's reputation for laziness and self-indulgence soon surpassed that of his late enemy. He apparently made no attempt to arrest the collapse of the Seleukid position in Iran, for example. The Parthians, freed of the threat to their eastern borders by the invasion of the Greek kingdom of

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[74] I *Maccabees* 15.23.

[75] Jos., *AJ* 13.86; I *Maccabees* 10.67.

Baktria by nomads,[76] were able to invade Media, which they controlled by 148;[77] in southern Iran control of the region of Elymais was seized by the local tribes, who had long been Seleukid enemies and victims, and a king called Kamniskires began minting coins about this time.[78] To Philometor all this meant he was able to pose as his son-in-law's mentor and protector, and the limited Seleukid kingdom shrank still more into the status of a Ptolemaic client.

Philometor must be acknowledged as one of the most cunning and diplomatically accomplished of the Ptolemies. He had replaced a vigorous if unpopular Seleukid king with a compliant one, to whom he had married his daughter. This would not necessarily mean he had much influence at Alexander's court, except that Alexander's laziness allowed Ptolemaic influence to penetrate. The succession dispute of 152–150 had also had its usual effect on the outer edges of the Seleukid kingdom. Normally it would have been the new king's early task to set out on an expedition to restore the situation, particularly in the east. Demetrios had not done so, but had not needed to, given the relative success of Antiochos' expedition. Alexander, however, was trapped in Syria by the threat from Demetrios the Younger, who was recruiting mercenaries in the Aegean. At the same time, Alexander showed little appreciation of the overall needs of the kingdom. Philometor's policy had therefore produced the progressive collapse of his Seleukid rival, who was involved in a continuing civil war. As yet, of course, this is not another 'Syrian War', but his involvement in the intrigue and diplomacy which brought the situation about was so obvious that any deterioration in Alexander's situation would necessarily involve Philometor.

[76] Habicht in *CAH* VIII, 371.
[77] Justin 41.6.6.
[78] J. Harmatta, 'Parthia and Elymais in the second century BC', *AAH* 29, 1981, 189–217.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# THE SEVENTH WAR, THE TRIUMPH OF PTOLEMY PHILOMETOR

Ptolemy VI had been very successful in his military operations inside Egypt, and in his diplomacy in Rome and Syria and Koile Syria. But there were a long list of loose ends which would ultimately undo all his work: he had refrained from killing his brother Euergetes; he had sponsored Alexander Balas as king in the Seleukid kingdom, but Alexander was less than energetic, and two of the sons of Demetrios I had escaped the cull of his relatives; Rome, when the Senate could pay attention, was not going to be pleased to see the increase in Ptolemy's power. He still controlled the three posts in the Aegean—Itanos, Thera, Methana—which could allow him to interfere in what was now already a Roman area if he chose.

For the present Rome had other preoccupations: the Third Punic War broke out in 149, Macedon rebelled in 148, and the Akhaian League was proving recalcitrant, while the war in Spain was a continuing drain on Roman strength. So for several years the crisis in the western Mediterranean allowed the parallel crises in the east to go on without Roman interference. It may be possible to put it another way: it was Rome's preoccupation which had allowed the various players in the east to indulge in their own crisis; this formulation, however, besides being far too Roman-centred, would presuppose that Rome had been interested earlier, for which there is little evidence; also, the crisis in the east had been going on and developing from 154 or even earlier, with only marginal attention from Rome even before it was engulfed in more immediate problems. The affairs of the eastern Mediterranean were more or less autonomous at this period—and, of course, Rome had no interest in, or apparently no knowledge of, affairs even further to the east.

The crisis in the east was much more serious, in fact, than the wars of Rome in the west. The civil war in the Seleukid kingdom gave the vigorous Parthian king, Mithradates I, the opportunity to invade Media. He had been preoccupied by a war with Baktria until about 150, and coins from Ekbatana indicate that Alexander still controlled that city

and its mint in 148.[1] Further, a dedication to Herakles Kallinikos ('the victor') was carved in that year above the road through the pass of Bisitun which leads from Babylonia through the Zagros Mountains to Iran.[2] Yet such a dedication—by a subordinate of a satrap whose victory was celebrated and commemorated—also indicates that there had been fighting on a fairly large scale in Iran, where the main enemy was the Parthian king.

This monument indicates that the Seleukid government as a whole did not neglect Iran, for the satrap Kleomenes clearly had enough forces to hold his own at first. But Alexander as king had other concerns in the west of his kingdom, which may well have prevented him from attending to the east, though his reputation for pleasure-seeking and laziness suggests he left more distant concerns to others.

For Alexander Balas, however, the main problem was the gathering strength of Demetrios, the eldest surviving son of Demetrios I. Based at Knidos in Karia, he had by 148 collected a considerable force of mercenaries. Aged no more than thirteen in 148, Demetrios was presumably assisted, if not controlled, by others who knew where the soldiers could be hired and could provide the necessary force and command skills. The source of his finance was partly a considerable sum in gold which his father had sent with him, though it may be that the mercenaries were persuaded to enlist largely on a promise of later payment. This recruitment must have begun soon after the death of Demetrios I in 150, and by spring 147 the new army of Demetrios the Younger was ready. That is, his existence and growth had been a constant threat to King Alexander in Syria since his victory, and had pinned him down in Syria in anticipation of being attacked.

Demetrios had contracted with a Cretan force during 148, which was commanded by a mercenary captain called Lasthenes. This army landed in Kilikia next year.[3] Other preparations had also been made—there had been plenty of recent examples of how to do this. The governor of Koile Syria, Apollonios Taos, came out in Demetrios' favour.[4] Alexander had been in Phoenicia, probably at Ptolemais-Ake, when Demetrios

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[1] G.K. Jenkins, 'Notes on Seleucid Coins', *Numismatic Chronicle*, 6 Ser., 11, 1951, 1–21.

[2] L. Robert, review of *Samothrace* II, *Gnomon* 35, 1963, 76; also in Kurht and Sherwin-White, *Samarkhand to Sardis*, 223 and plates 27 and 28.

[3] I *Maccabees* 10.67; Jos., *AJ* 13.86.

[4] I *Maccabees* 10.69; Jos., *AJ* 13.88.

landed, and hurried north as soon as he heard the news.[5] The actions of Apollonios Taos are a difficulty. I *Maccabees* says he was appointed as governor of Koile Syria by Demetrios;[6] Josephus, who at this point seems very dependent on *Maccabees*, said he was 'left' in Palestine as governor by Alexander, but then adopted a hostile attitude to Jonathan, who was Alexander's ally and subordinate, and so moved across to support Demetrios.[7] Josephus may have misunderstood his source, whether *Maccabees* or another, but if it was Demetrios who appointed Apollonios, one has to wonder where the latter acquired an army, which I *Maccabees* describes as a 'powerful force', which was encamped at Jamneia.[8]

There is not necessarily a contradiction, of course, if one assumes that Apollonios was originally appointed by Alexander, who 'left' him in Palestine, and that he then defected to Demetrios, no doubt by prearrangement, who then reappointed him. So the 'powerful force' which Apollonios commanded was in fact the concentrated garrisons of the Palestine region, which he had carried with him into the legitimist camp. One may again see the 'Seleukid effect' in operation perhaps, where the legitimate Seleukid king can command the loyalty of the citizens even at a distance. At the same time it is worth recalling that the defecting governors of Koile Syria—Theodotos, perhaps Ptolemaios son of Thraseas, Apollonios, and in Antioch the commander of the forces which deserted to Demetrios—all brought their armies with them. The link between general and his army was clearly very strong, though it could be superseded in times of crisis by that between king and army.

The timing of these events would therefore be:

1. Demetrios' army lands in Kilikia;
2. Alexander hears the news at Ptolemais-Ake and hurries off to the north, leaving Apollonios in charge in Palestine;
3. Apollonios, his loyalty previously tampered with, comes out for Demetrios and gathers his forces at Jamneia.

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[5] So it is assumed; according to I *Maccabees* he 'returned' to Antioch; Josephos says he went 'from Phoenicia to Antioch'; Ptolemais (administratively part of Phoenicia) produced much coinage at this time and had been the place where Alexander married Kleopatra.

[6] I *Maccabees* 10.69.

[7] Jos., *AJ* 13.88.

[8] I *Maccabees* 10.19.

All of this was happening in a relatively short period (the time taken for the news to reach Alexander in Ptolemais-Ake and for him to set off for the north—say two or three weeks).

The citizens of Antioch came out on Demetrios' side, either from preference or, more likely, because of the arrival of the Cretans from Kilikia; they would have made the journey to Antioch more quickly than Alexander could from the south. Many of Alexander's soldiers changed sides as well, perhaps following and imitating the escapade of Apollonios. It is probable that if Apollonios had been contacted beforehand, others had been as well.

The sources for these events are concerned particularly with how they affected Palestine, and are seen from the point of view of the Maccabean regime in Judaea. So Jonathan becomes the central figure, but in fact it is Apollonios' movements and conduct we need to follow. He is said to have threatened Jonathan from the camp at Jamneia, Jonathan is then supposed to have seen this as a challenge to come out of the Judaean uplands and fight. In fact Apollonios did not wait for Jonathan's response but marched his forces southwards from Jamneia. Only then did Jonathan move, and when he did he ignored Apollonios' army and attacked Joppa, which is twenty kilometres *north* of Jamneia, and so well away from Apollonios' forces. He took the city, Apollonios having left only a small garrison there.[9] The citizens surrendered the city, presumably less because Jonathan attacked—Jewish armies notoriously were lacking in siege techniques—than because he and they were on Alexander's side.

So the question is, what was Apollonios doing if he was not facing Jonathan, and not marching after Alexander? The answer is, that he was positioning his forces to face an attack from Egypt. Ptolemy Philometor, with a 'huge army', and a fleet of ships, arrived in southern Palestine after Jonathan's exploit at Joppa.[10] Gathering such a force, 'countless as the sand on the sea-shore', as I *Maccabees* puts it, must have taken some time, and Ptolemy was coming to the support of Alexander, his son-in-law. That is, Alexander had reported Demetrios' arrival to Ptolemy as soon as he himself heard of it, and Ptolemy responded as quickly as possible, given that he had to assemble a force of soldiers and a fleet and march through Sinai, paced by his fleet. He required a large force

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9 I *Maccabees* 10.74–76; Jos., *AJ* 13.91–92.
10 I *Maccabees* 11.1; Jos. *AJ* 13.103.

because, as he soon heard, he would have to fight Apollonios' army. Or so he thought. The sequence of events is therefore now rather more complex:

1. Alexander hears of Demetrios' landing in Kilikia and at once warns Ptolemy, then leaves for the north, apparently without the local forces;
2. Apollonios defects and concentrates his own forces at Jamneia, supposedly warning Jonathan to stay put;
3. Ptolemy, having gathered his own forces, marches along the Sinai coast road;
4. Apollonios, hearing of Ptolemy's approach, moves south to meet him; his intention was presumably to hold at Gaza;
5. Jonathan, free of Apollonios' superiority, raids the coast and takes Joppa.

All this took place in the time it took Alexander to ride north, and Demetrios' army to take Antioch.

At that point, therefore, there were two separate wars going on, one in North Syria between Alexander and Demetrios, of which we know little or nothing, though Demetrios quickly captured Antioch, assisted by the citizens, and one in southern Palestine where Apollonios' army was now threatened from two directions, from the south by Ptolemy's force, and from the north by Jonathan's. Ptolemy's approach, and his armed response to Alexander's plea for help, may be said to mark the beginning of a new Syrian War, the seventh. It had begun as a Seleukid civil war, and Ptolemy could have left it at that, but he, as we will see, decided that by intervening he could gain substantial political benefits for himself.

When Joppa fell to Jonathan, Ptolemy's army was still some distance away, perhaps still in Sinai; Apollonios turned to deal with Jonathan, making his base at Azotos (Ashdod). He lured Jonathan forward, hoping to rely on his cavalry, of which the Jewish forces had none. Both sides kept out part of their forces for the decisive punch, Apollonios leaving a thousand cavalry in a side valley, Jonathan setting aside a force under his brother Simon.[11]

[11] I *Maccabees* 10.77–82; Jos., *AJ* 13.92–97; Josephos' account is an elaboration of that in I *Maccabees*, imaginatively importing the usual details of battle practice, with the added element of Jewish staunchness.

The battle is described by I *Maccabees* and Josephus in the conventional terms of a Jewish phalanx assailed by Apollonios' forces with missiles. It seems, however, that it did not come to an infantry battle. Instead, Apollonios' horsemen bombarded the Jews with missiles from a distance and Jonathan's men formed a solid shield wall as protection, such as Harold at Hastings or Robert Bruce at Bannockburn used. As the cavalry tired (the fight lasted all day), Simon brought forward the Jewish reserve and managed to attack the enemy infantry, which was apparently separated from the cavalry. Apollonios is said to have had 8,000 hoplites, by Josephus, though no numbers are quoted by *Maccabees*. Jonathan is said to have only 10,000 men, a force which was outnumbered by the infantry-plus-cavalry of Apollonios. The defeat of Apollonios' infantry by a part of Jonathan's would in fact suggest that Simon had the greater numbers as well as, it seems, surprise. And as Apollonios had relied on his cavalry in the battle, it would seem that he had left most of his footmen in garrison elsewhere—no doubt garrisoning Gaza to block the advance of Philometor out of Sinai. Without the cavalry to defend them, the Greek phalangites were vulnerable to Simon's light infantry, and the flight of the cavalry so demoralized the infantry that they broke and fled. Jonathan pursued, killing the fugitives, and took Azotos. Those fugitives who had taken refuge in the Dagon Temple died when the building was fired; the city was also burnt and plundered. The Jewish soldiers then ravaged the surrounding countryside.[12]

Jonathan, of course, was fighting as the ally, or rather subject, of King Alexander; he was no doubt fully aware of the approach of Ptolemy's army. Alexander showed his appreciation by promoting him to the rank of Kinsman, and transferring more territory to his jurisdiction. Meanwhile Jonathan moved south to Ashkelon, where he camped for a time before returning to Jerusalem with his army and his loot. Alexander sent orders to those loyal to him in Palestine and Phoenicia that they should welcome Ptolemy's forces. Since there was no armed force left in the region capable of facing the army from Egypt, this was what happened, including a visit by Jonathan to greet Ptolemy at Ptolemais-Ake. Ptolemy's campaign and peaceful occupation was conducted very carefully. He was welcomed, certainly, in the cities he occupied, but he also left a garrison in each of the cities he reached. This seems to

[12] I *Maccabees* 10.83–85; Jos., *AJ* 13.98–100.

have included Joppa, which Jonathan had taken with the help of the citizens on behalf of Alexander.

Philometor had come to Palestine ostensibly to support his son-in-law, and this therefore technically marks the beginning of the Seventh Syrian War, though the real beginning of the fighting was with Demetrios' landing in Kilikia, the event which triggered Ptolemy's military move. With the elimination of Apollonios Taos (if he survived the fight, he disappeared), Philometor and Jonathan shared control of Koile Syria, though Philometor was said to have been somewhat disturbed by the evidence of Jewish ravaging,[13] and his garrisons indicated clearly enough who had the real power in the region. These two supporters of Alexander marched north in company all the way to the Eleutheros River, the old Ptolemaic-Seleukid boundary, at which point Jonathan turned—or was sent—back.[14]

When Philometor left garrisons in the towns and cities along his route,[15] no doubt he claimed to be acting in the name of his son-in-law, but in many of these places in the previous year or two Ptolemaic influence had already been strong, visible today in the emblems and weights of the city coinages.[16] Now these places had Ptolemaic soldiers as garrisons and it will have been clear enough to the inhabitants what Philometor's intentions were. He had been particularly upset by Jewish ravaging because he intended to annex the area, and so it was his land which was being ravaged. Several of the places he had garrisoned disliked the new situation very much.

These events clearly loosened Seleukid control of Koile Syria still more. In Judaea Jonathan Maccabaeus' clever politicking succeeded, at least for the present, in enlarging the area under his rule: Alexander, besides promoting him to Kinsman-status, handed him the town of Akkaron (the Philistine Ekron) 'and all its districts' to add to his territories.[17] As the dispute between the rival Seleukid kings continued for several years, he was able to establish himself as the accepted Judaean ruler, carefully manoeuvring between them. Philometor restricted his own activities to the coastal cities. If he had succeeded in holding on to Koile Syria,

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13 I *Maccabees* 11.4.

14 I *Maccabees* 11.6–7; Jos., *AJ* 13.105.

15 I *Maccabees* 11.3.

16 E.T. Newell, 'Late Seleucid Mints in Ptolemais-Ake and Damascus', *NNM* 84, 1939; and 'The First Seleucid Coinage of Tyre', *NNM* 10, 1921; H. Seyrig, *Trésors du Levant anciens et nouveaux*, Paris 1973.

17 I *Maccabees* 10.89; Jos., *AJ* 13.102.

however, no doubt Jonathan would have faced Ptolemaic pressure to submit. But during the period of the royal conflict he was in a good position.

Philometor marched on beyond the Eleutheros River as far as Seleukeia-in-Pieria.[18] Alexander was in control of Antioch[19] once more by that time, through his minister Ammonios; he had presumably reduced the city to obedience after it had declared for Demetrios earlier. Demetrios himself was also somewhere in the north, but is not clear where. The man with the real power in the situation was Ptolemy, since his troops occupied the coastal cities from Gaza to Seleukeia-in-Pieria, and his—or rather, Alexander's—ally Jonathan was in control of much of inland Palestine. Philometor at Seleukeia now revealed his real purpose.

He announced that, while he had been at Ptolemais-Ake, an assassination attempt on him had been foiled, and he blamed Ammonios, Alexander's principal minister.[20] Why Ammonios should have done this is not clear, nor were any reasons apparently produced, though if Philometor's purpose had become clear by the time he reached Ptolemais, presumably Ammonios objected on Alexander's behalf to Philometor's obvious takeover of the Palestinian cities. But one is reminded of the effect of the attempt on the life of the Philometor's brother, and the change of opinion it produced at Rome.[21] It is curious that Philometor did not make a fuss about it at the time of the attempt, but waited until he had occupied all the coastal cities and was at Seleukeia. There is a strong whiff of contrivance, even invention, about the incident.

Philometor demanded that Alexander surrender Ammonios for punishment. Alexander refused, partly presumably to retain Ammonios' services, and partly because if he surrendered his minister he was admitting complicity himself; however, since Alexander gets a bad press in the ancient sources as well as in modern accounts, it is worth pointing out that, whatever more pragmatic reasons he had, standing by his minister was also the honourable course. Philometor announced that his daughter Kleopatra Thea was no longer married to Alexander,

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[18] I *Maccabees* 11.86.

[19] Jos., *AJ* 13.112.

[20] Jos., *AJ* 13.106 is the only source to name Ammonios; indeed I *Maccabees* omits the whole assassination episode even though Jonathan was at Ptolemais at the time. Also no other ancient source mentions the attempt, though it is supposed that Josephos was relying on Nikolaos of Damascus at this point.

[21] Polybios 33.11.1–3.

and he offered her instead to Demetrios.[22] Presumably the lady was already under Philometor's control, no doubt having been left in presumptive safety at Ptolemaios-Ake when Alexander went north to confront Demetrios. Their son, Antiochos, had by this time been sent by Alexander to a foster father, Diokles (or Zabdiel), an Arab chieftain.[23] Perhaps if Philometor had had the child under his control he would have made him king. The fact that the boy had already been carefully separated from his mother and sent at a distance from his grandfather even before Ptolemy arrived suggests that relations between Alexander and Ptolemy were not at their most cordial even as Ptolemy was being appealed to for help. This may also be put in the scales when weighing the validity of Ptolemy's claim of being the object of an assassin instigated by Ammonios.

Demetrios was, unlike the child, available and persuadable. Though no details of the agreement except the marriage are recorded, it is evident the Philometor's price for transferring his support to Demetrios was Koile Syria, which was already under his occupation. Demetrios, of course, still aged only fifteen or so, was hardly his own master. A capable boy, since he had had the initiative to contact men such as Lasthenes and his Cretans, he was nevertheless still in the hands of his ministers and generals in terms of policy. Further, he really had little choice in the matter. The marriage with Kleopatra Thea was arranged, and the price agreed. The fact of the agreement tends to suggest that Demetrios' affairs had not prospered. Details of the fighting in the north are scarce to non-existent, but at Antioch at least his initial welcome by the citizens had not prevented Alexander and Ammonios from recovering control of the city. Ptolemy gained control of Seleukeia-in-Pieria when he reached the area, and Alexander is said to have gone into Kilikia,[24] which may mean he was in pursuit of the defeated Demetrios, presumably feeling he could leave Antioch to be defended by Ammonios.

Ptolemy's motives for this treacherous *volte-face* will have been based on his ambition to recover—or rather now, to retain—Koile Syria. Therefore the weaker of the two Seleukids must be his ally, since he would be the easier to control and dominate. Alexander's man in Judaea—Jonathan—had been victorious, and now it may be that Alexander himself was winning the war in the north. Demetrios' acceptance of Ptolemy's

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[22] I *Maccabees* 11.9–10.
[23] Diod. 32.27.9d.
[24] Diod. 32.27.10.2

terms, of course, transformed the civil war aspect of the conflict, which, thanks to Philometor, had been becoming less visible for some time. At any rate Alexander now tried to attack Ptolemy, and returned to the fray with an army large enough to challenge that of Philometor. Philometor advanced into Antioch, where Alexander was now deeply unpopular due to the control exercised by Ammonios on his behalf, and Ptolemy had little difficulty in seizing the city.[25] It now fell into the hands of two of Philometor's men, Hierax and Diodotos, the first an Egyptian Greek, the latter a Syrian Greek from a town near Apameia.[26] Ammonios tried to escape, dressed in women's clothes, but was recognized and murdered.[27]

Philometor was thus in control not only of coastal Koile Syria (Palestine and Phoenicia), but of a good part of Seleukid north Syria as well, at least of the cities of Seleukeia and Antioch and their territories. The suggestion was now made, apparently by Diodotos and Hierax, who roused the Antiochenes, that he take on the Seleukid kingship as well as the Ptolemaic.[28] It does not seem to have been Ptolemy's own initiative. It immediately contradicted the policy he had so far pursued, of gaining control of Koile Syria, annexing it by victory in the war, and allying with and promoting Demetrios to the Seleukid kingship. Demetrios would scarcely be pleased to find that he had not only lost the great province his dynasty had ruled for the previous half-century and more, but the kingship he had fought for as well. It would seem, therefore, that this was an idea of the two ministers, perhaps misreading the general situation, or sycophantically hoping to please the all-powerful king.

Ptolemy, nevertheless, must have been tempted. The union of the two kingdoms could well release the energies absorbed in and dissipated by their mutual rivalry—unless it caused even more hostility between the two kingdoms. There would be a single state from Cyrenaica to Iran, which would include the two great economic powerhouses of Egypt and Babylonia. The sheer power which would be under Philometor's hand would clearly deter Euergetes from any further adventures, and the advance of the Parthians could be blocked, partly by the availability of the military manpower now to hand, and partly by the absence of the distraction of the Seleukid dynastic conflict—not to mention the removal of the hopeless Alexander and the too-young Demetrios.

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[25] I *Maccabees* 11.13; Jos., *AJ* 13.113; Diod. 32.27.9c.
[26] Diod. 32.9c.
[27] Jos., *AJ* 13.108.
[28] Diod. 32.9c.

Yet there were quite substantial objections to the union of the two kingdoms. The sheer size of the joint kingdom would be a major difficulty. The two rival kings, Demetrios and Alexander, would both object violently, so the first thing Philometor would need to do would be to fight them, possibly even in combination. If he won he could do nothing less than kill them, for their survival would inevitably be disruptive to a united kingdom. The offer of the kingship came from the citizens and soldiers in Antioch, who had no right to make it; it would be expected that other regions and cities would be less than enthusiastic, and the Antiochenes had changed their allegiance several times in the past few years.[29] There really was very little popular basis of support for Philometor as a Seleukid king—which was, in essence, what the offer amounted to.

Then there was the problem of Rome. In the past generation it had become all too clear to every ruler around the Mediterranean that the Roman Republic was not going to permit the existence of a potential political competitor anywhere within its range. No clear Roman policy existed, but the lessons of the defeat of Philip V and of Antiochos III, the destruction of Carthage, Corinth, and the Macedonian monarchy, and the action of Popillius Laenas at Eleusis showed it clearly enough. It was also the lesson delivered by the intended transfer of Cyprus to Euergetes, by the recent defeat of Macedon, by the treatment of Rhodes, Kappadokia, Carthage, the Akhaian League—and both of these last had been destroyed even as Ptolemy was in occupation of Syria. If after doing down all these supposed enemies, all of them really quite minor powers, the Senate suddenly found that the two remaining states of any power in the Mediterranean region had become one single state, and one controlling the great wealth-producing regions of Egypt and Babylonia, its reaction would be immediately hostile. And Rome had potential allies in Euergetes, who could be shifted to Egypt, and Attalos II, a close neighbour of Syria. Roman hostility was something Philometor could not deal with.

For some time, however, Philometor ruled in Antioch as king.[30] He wore two diadems as a signal of his two kingdoms—though by wearing two he was in effect keeping the two states separate. He began a new

[29] The internal politics of the city of Antioch are barely known, but must have been complex, to judge by these quick changes; in the next year or so further changes took place. Unfortunately identifying the leaders of opinion and / or parties is not possible: cf. G. Downey, *History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton 1961.

[30] The dating of all these events is difficult. The war actually began in 147 when Philometor brought his army through Sinai, and he was briefly dual-king in the summer

dating era in which 'year 36 corresponds to the year 1'—that is, Philometor's 36th year as king in Egypt was also his first as king in Syria.[31] This moment of satisfaction was actually quite brief, no more than a month or two, and the difficulties and perils of its continuance soon persuaded him to give up the idea—or, as Josephus puts it, 'he determined to refrain from appearing to give the Romans any reason for disliking him'. Once again the Antiochenes were persuaded to change their allegiance, this time to accept Demetrios II as their king.[32] Philometor did this in a way which made it clear that the kingship was in his gift, and that he would be an active suzerain over Demetrios. Philometor thereby aimed to fasten a much tighter supervision over Demetrios than he had achieved over Alexander. One is reminded of Antiochos IV's successive attempts to become suzerain over the young Ptolemy VI. (And Ptolemy VI had been the same age then as Demetrios II was now.)

Demetrios now swiftly arrived and consummated the marriage with Kleopatra Thea.[33] It then became clear that Ptolemy was not actually giving up very much by ceasing to be a 'Seleukid' king: he kept Koile Syria, and kept his suzerainty over his son-in-law, who was now Demetrios, even younger than Alexander; all this was arranged, it seems, by agreement with Demetrios. But Philometor had to fight even for this. Alexander returned to the fight out of Kilikia with an army described by Josephus as 'huge'. This was comprised of those who had been loyal to him all along, plus those disgusted at events in Antioch, plus no doubt men he had recruited in Kilikia, where he had been well known in the years before his success. The more one considers Alexander's life and behaviour, the more the ancient sources' dwelling on his love of luxury and self-indulgence look to be partial and inaccurate. His energy was clearly considerable, as was his ability. Left to himself he might well have succeeded as a Seleukid king more than Demetrios II ever did.

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of 145; it is the two years in between which is the problem. The account of events which can be reconstructed is scarcely detailed enough to fill two years. It is clear that much detail has been lost, detail which would, were it known, help to understand motives and sequences.

[31] M. Chauveau, 'Un été 145', *Bulletin de l'Institut francais d'archéologie orientale* 90, 1990, quoting *P. dem Fuad*. 1; L.S. Amentine, 'Tolomeo VI Filometore re di Siria?' *Istituto Lombardo (Rend. Lett.)* 108, 1974, 511–529.

[32] Jos., *AJ* 13.113–114.

[33] Jos., *AJ* 13.116.

Alexander's army ravaged the land about Antioch and succeeded in drawing Ptolemy and Demetrios in coalition out of the city. The three kings and their armies met in battle by the Oenoparos River not far north of Antioch. Alexander's army was presumably outnumbered, and was beaten, and he fled for refuge to the Arab chief Diokles/Zabdiel;[34] he was there murdered by two of his own men.[35] Ptolemy was badly wounded and died of his wounds.[36] Demetrios was the unexpected winner, less through his own abilities than in being the survivor.

The settlement made by Ptolemy and Demetrios was at once void—as much by Ptolemy's death as by anything Demetrios did. In many of the coastal towns and cities the news of Philometor's death was the signal for the citizens to expel his garrisons, which is clear evidence that a return to Ptolemaic rule, while welcomed by some, was resented generally. Similarly Demetrios turned on the Ptolemaic forces within his reach. There was probably little fighting. Demetrios secured the elephants, and the soldiers withdrew to Egypt.[37]

The removal of both of his rivals in kingship left Demetrios II in power, though he was still shackled to his sponsors and patrons, and he was unable to establish control over them or dismiss them for some time. He was compelled to accept the authority of Jonathan over Judaea, though he did get him, by his concessions, to cease to besiege the citadel in Jerusalem, which was still held by its Seleukid garrison.[38]

Ptolemy Philometor had been as successful as any eastern Mediterranean king could expect to be by the 140s. He had been careful, proceeding step by step, using diplomacy for preference and only employing force when diplomacy failed, and had ended as king in Egypt, Cyprus, and Syria, and having recovered Koile Syria for his family's rule. In the end, he reached too far. His acceptance of the Seleukid crown was a mistake, but he could perhaps not have refused without alienating his officials and supporters in Antioch. Another error was that he left only a young son (and two daughters) as his successors.[39] The obvious person

[34] Ibid; I *Maccabees* 11.17.

[35] Diod. 32.9; Jos., *AJ* 13.118.

[36] Livy, *Per* LII; Jos., *AJ* 13.116–117.

[37] Jos., *AJ* 13.120.

[38] I *Maccabees* 11.20–27; Jos., *AJ* 13.121; these soldiers had obviously been in occupation all through the war; presumably originally loyal to Alexander, they now shifted without difficulty to Demetrios.

[39] His elder son, Ptolemy Eupator, had died in 152: E. van 't Dack, 'Encore le Problème de Ptolémée Eupator', *Ptolemaica Selecta*, Louvain 1988 (*Studia Hellenistica* 29) 157–174 (originally published 1983).

to assume power in Alexandria was the new king's uncle, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes. There was some resistance to the prospect of Euergetes returning to rule in Egypt. He would either be his brother's successor as king or regent for his nephew, but the only alternative was another minority with the queen mother as regent. Euergetes may have been an unpleasant and ugly man, but he was undoubtedly a competent ruler. After a three-week interregnum, Euergetes arrived in Alexandria by invitation and was accepted as king.[40]

This Syrian War, the seventh, lasted only a couple of years (147–145), and is usually well disguised as a civil war within the Seleukid family (assuming one accepts Alexander as a *bona fide* Seleukid). It was certainly that, but it developed into a determined effort by Philometor to recover Koile Syria, and so it has to be classified as an international conflict. He worked towards it with some skill, first softening up the area for Alexander, then occupying it with his own troops, finally gaining the agreement of Demetrios II—the legitimate Seleukid—for its transference to him. Yet he was then seduced by the prospect of the union of the two kingdoms. Had he been content with Koile Syria he could have withdrawn from Antioch, leaving the field clear for Demetrios and Alexander to fight each other to exhaustion in North Syria. But the idea of a double kingdom detained him long enough for Alexander to arrive to challenge his settlement, and thus led to his death. Yet the idea of the union of the kingdoms did not vanish.

[40] Justin 38.8.2–3; Diod. 33.13.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# THE LEGACY OF PHILOMETOR

A new Seleukid civil war grew directly out of the events of 147–145. One of the two men who had been in partial control of Antioch when Ptolemy and Alexander were allied survived the confusion of the deaths of the kings. He was Diodotos, from Kasiana, a village in the territory of Apameia; his partner Hierax returned to Egypt, where he was identified as a partisan of Philometor and executed by Ptolemy Euergetes.[1] Diodotos had been a partisan of Alexander's also, and presumably before that of Antiochos IV and V—he was probably old enough to have been one of Antiochos IV's Friends or officials. He retired to Apameia, being unable to accept Demetrios II as his king—it was probably unsafe for him to come anywhere near him. He was determined enough in his opposition to take action. He gathered enough support to rally forces to promote Alexander's infant son as Antiochos VI. This was the boy being fostered by the Arab chieftain Iamblichos or Malchos, from whom Diodotos acquired him.[2] In his usurpation he was greatly assisted by his Seleukid opponent.

Demetrios II relied on his Cretan mercenaries, and on support from Jonathan Maccabaeus, neither of whom were in the least liked in the great cities—at one point Antioch was virtually sacked by the Cretan soldiers[3] and some Jewish auxiliaries he had borrowed from Jonathan. Thus Diodotos and Antiochos VI continued to gather support partly because of the unpleasantness of Demetrios' forces; yet Demetrios was of the legitimate Seleukid line, and could count on considerable residual support because of that. The result was a continuing civil war, which neither side could win.

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[1] *Pros. Ptol.*, 264, 2163, 17012; possibly he took charge of the military withdrawal after Philometor's death—this is a guess only.

[2] Jos., *AJ* 13.131–132; 'Malchos' is, of course, a title (Arabic *malik*—'king'), not a name. That an Arab sheik in the 140s used such a title is a strong signal that the strength of the desert tribes was increasing; Diodoros 33.4 calls him Iamblichos, I *Maccabees* 11.18, Imalkue.

[3] Jos., *AJ* 13.129.

The trigger was Demetrios' decision to use his limited financial resources to pay his mercenaries, and therefore to disband the Seleukid army. No doubt this was the result of the damage sustained, particularly in north Syria, during the recent war. Demetrios also had a justified suspicion that the army was at least potentially disloyal—sections of his Seleukid forces had changed sides with no compunction in the last few years. And there was the determination on the part of the mercenaries to profit while they could. The problem was that this action brought Demetrios' unpopularity to the surface, both in Antioch, when the citizens took up arms and besieged the king and his mercenaries in the palace, and at Apameia, where Diodotos seized the opportunity to proclaim Antiochos the son of Alexander as King Antiochos VI.[4]

The mercenaries reconquered Antioch for Demetrios, in the process burning much of the city,[5] which scarcely assisted his popularity. In Apameia Diodotos was able to hold on to the city with little difficulty. Coins were regularly minted in the name of Antiochos VI from late in the year 168 of the Seleukid era, which is 144 BC.[6] The crisis therefore took some months to develop, after the deaths of Alexander and Ptolemy Philometor in the summer of 145. Diodotos at some point acquired ships, and established a naval base at the former Ptolemaic fortress of Korakesion in Pamphylia, taken by Antiochos III but now outside the bounds of the Seleukid kingdom. He is credited—if that is the word—with instigating the piracy which Kilikians practiced later.[7] The aftermath of the Ptolemaic invasion was another stage in the ongoing Seleukid civil war over the kingship which had begun when Heliodoros murdered Seleukos IV.

The progress of the two sides can be traced more or less by the coins they minted—Diodotos, for example, gained control of Antioch in 143[8]—and in the destruction they caused.[9] Yet the main point is not the details of the fighting but the fact that it went on without result. In 142 Antiochos VI died—murdered by Diodotos, his enemies said, in the course of a medical operation. Diodotos now took the kingship himself,

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[4] Diod. 33.41.

[5] Diod. 33.28a.

[6] A. Houghton, 'The Revolt of Tryphon and the Accession of Antiochus VI at Apamea', *Schweizer Numismatische Rundschau* 71, 1992, 119–141.

[7] Strabo 14.5.2; cf also H.A. Ormerod, *Piracy in the Ancient World*, Liverpool, 1924, 204–205, and P. de Souza, *Piracy in the Graeco-Roman World*, Cambridge 1999, 98–99.

[8] Houghton, 'Revolt of Tryphon', especially the chart on 140.

[9] Destruction of Berytos: Strabo 16.2.19.

under the throne name of Tryphon. It is impossible at this distance to estimate the effect this had on the level of his support, though perhaps his slow progress was halted. He was acting in the tradition of Molon and Timarchos, and his basic programme was that he could rule the kingdom better than the members of the Seleukid family who had founded and ruled it so far. We know little about the political programmes of the earlier rebels, though they must have had one, but Tryphon lasted longer than any of them. The origin of his usurpation lay back in the conflict between Alexander and Demetrios, and he appears to have opposed Demetrios II always. His rebellion (at first with Antiochos VI as a figurehead, and so at first in the name of the alternative dynastic line) began when Demetrios attempted to favour the mercenaries over the regular Seleukid army, and was fuelled by refugees from the Cretan sack of Antioch. So Tryphon was proclaiming a return to older Seleukid practices. His coins show he used the title *autokrator* rather than *basileus*, and featured in some cases a Macedonian military shield. The personal title he chose, 'Tryphon', harks back to the Dionysiac *tryphe* of the Ptolemies, and to the chosen epithets of his dead ward, who was Epiphanes Dionysios. It all adds up to a rejection of the Seleukid conflicts of the last generation, and a call to return to the supposed military values and success of the more distant past.[10]

Demetrios II was by this time nearly twenty years old, and had more or less freed himself of his dependence on the Cretan mercenaries and on Jonathan and Lasthenes. He now came to the conclusion that the situation in Syria was stable enough for him to leave for the east. This implies that Tryphon's progress had been halted. The move was necessary, in his view, because the long dispute in Syria had been accompanied by a general collapse of the Seleukid position in Iran. The Parthian king Mithradates I had moved into Media by the early 140s, at the time Demetrios II was fighting Alexander Balas, and Ptolemy Philometor was fighting these two in succession. At first, as the Bisitun inscription which commemorates the success of Alexander's satrap Kleomenes indicates, he was stopped, and he then seems to have campaigned towards the east.[11]

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[10] T. Fischer, 'Zu Tryphon', *Chiron* 2, 1972, 201–213; H.R. Baldus, 'Der Helm des Tryphon und des Selekidische Chronologie der Jahre 146–138 v. Chr.', *Jahrbuch des Numismatik Geschichte* 20, 1970, 217–239; *British Museum Catalogue, Seleukid Kings of Syria*, 68–69.

[11] It was at this time that the city of Ai Khanum in Afghanistan was destroyed. It appears to have been one of the most important cities of the Baktrian kingdom, and its destruction marks the effective end of Greco-Macedonian power north of the Oxus River.

Later in the 140s—while Demetrios and Tryphon fought in Syria—he returned to western Iran, where he now succeeded in driving out Seleukid authority, and in 141 he invaded and occupied Babylonia, taking control of the royal city Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris.[12]

Mithradates' invasion of Babylonia and Media was accompanied by the assumption of effective independence by the governors of the provinces to the south. In Charakene, the lands at the mouth of the rivers at the head of the Gulf (also called Mesene, where Antiochos IV had refounded Antiochia-Charax only two decades before), the *eparchos* Hyspaosines appears later as king;[13] to his east Kamniskires had been ruling of Elymais for some time, possibly as a Seleukid governor, possibly as a rebel against the Seleukids; he contested the Parthian advance, which does not necessarily imply loyalty to the Seleukids, only his opposition to the Parthian conquest.[14] East of both of these regions was Persis, an area which had shifted in and out of independence for a century, but which now produced coins and a dynasty of its own.[15] Media, north central Iran, was thus the section actually taken into Parthian rule by Mithradates, and in Babylonia it was only the central area of the country, around Babylon and Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, which was conquered. Taken all together, however, Mithradates' march on Babylon and the independence of the minor kingdoms to the south, which was a consequence of that march, destroyed the Seleukid kingdom in the east.

Demetrios, with a commendable sense of duty, turned away from his stalemated contest with Tryphon and marched east to fight for, at least, Babylonia.[16] The calculation must have been that if he recovered central Babylonia, the kingdoms to the south—Charakene and Elymais at least—would return to the Seleukid allegiance. Hyspaosines was a former governor and neither he nor Kamniskires had made any irrevocable political moves as yet. But Demetrios, never a particularly good military commander, was defeated and captured by Mithradates.[17] The

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[12] Justin 41.6.6.

[13] A.R. Bellinger, 'Hyspaosines of Charax', *Yale Classical Studies* 8, 1942, 53–67; S.A. Nodelman, 'A Preliminary History of Characene', *Berytus* 13, 1961, 91–121.

[14] Justin 41.6.8; J. Harmatta, 'Parthia and Elymais in the 2nd Century BC', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae*, 29, 1981, 185–217.

[15] P. Naster, 'Notes d'épigraphie monétaire de Perside: Fratakara, Frataraka ou Fritadara', *Iranica Antiqua* 8, 1968, 74–80.

[16] Justin 36.1.2; Jos., *AJ* 13.184–185.

[17] Justin 38.2.3; Jos., *AJ* 13.185–186.

fighting, however, did last for some time. Mithradates possessed central Babylonia by the summer of 141,[18] but Demetrios was not captured by him until the spring or summer of 139.[19] It was fortunate for the Seleukid system that Mithradates then had to turn back to deal with more trouble on his eastern frontier, where he was killed in battle next year.

This should have been Tryphon's moment, but he was now faced by Demetrios' brother, Antiochos VII, who had moved from Rhodes to Side (next door to Korakesion), now arrived in Syria to take up the work of his father and elder brother. He was now the last surviving adult member of the legitimate line (apart from imprisoned Demetrios), and the rival line of Antiochos IV had now expired (except for Alexander's sister Laodike, who was married to the Pontic king Mithradates V). To bolster his position Antiochos married Kleopatra Thea, the wife of Demetrios, who was holding Seleukid-in-Pieria against Tryphon. This gave him a wife and a city, Seleukeia-in-Pieria, as a first base, and from there he swept all before him. In part by an alliance with the current Maccabee, Simon, he was able to concentrate on destroying Tryphon, which he achieved by 138.[20]

All this was in large part Ptolemy Philometor's legacy. The main result of the Seventh Syrian War was therefore a prolonged internal crisis in the Seleukid kingdom (145–138), and the loss of all its provinces from Babylonia eastwards. In the west Judaea and Kommagene were barely under royal control, and many of the cities of Syria changed hands several times during the civil war. Had he lived Philometor would have had at least the satisfaction of seeing the Seleukid collapse, even if he had not been able to secure Koile Syria for his dynasty.

In Egypt Philometor's successor was his brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes. On his arrival in Alexandria he began with a selective purge of Philometor's son Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator and his supporters (including Hierax, who had been Diodotos' colleague in Antioch), and then he married Philometor's widow, their sister Kleopatra II.[21] All this

[18] Sachs and Hunger, –140.

[19] N.C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago 1938, 22–25.

[20] App. *Syr.* 38; Jos., *AJ* 13.222–227.

[21] Justin 38.8.2; on this cf. H. Heinen, 'Der Sohn des 6. Ptolemäers im Sommer 145. Zur Frage nach Ptolemaios VII Neos Philopator und zur Zahlung der Ptolemäerkönige', *AfP Beiheft* 3, 1997, 449–460, and M. Chauveau, 'Encore Ptolémée "VII" et le dieu Neos Philopator!', *Revue d'Egypte* 51, 2000, 257–261.

was fully in accord with normal practice by both Ptolemaic and Seleukid dynasties, since collateral members of dynasties were too dangerous to be allowed to live. The only exception had been Philometor's failure to kill Euergetes. (The consequence of a failure to kill off all competitors was seen in the death of Alexander Balas, which happened as a result of the survival of Demetrios II.) Euergetes' purge was very successful, and he did not leave any alternative Ptolemies available for any plotters to use, at least for the moment—unlike the situation produced in the Seleukid kingdom by Antiochos IV's usurpation. Euergetes always remained unpopular with the Alexandrians, in part because he was ugly and fat, but the governing measures he took were generally well considered. He withdrew his forces and governors from the three Ptolemaic posts in the Aegean, for instance, thus saving troops and money, and removing possible points of conflict, particularly with Rome, which was now a permanent presence in the Aegean as a result of the crushing of the Akhaian League and the conversion of Macedon into a province.[22] He reformed the administration of Cyprus, leaving much more authority in local hands, no doubt remembering that he had been rejected once by the Cypriots, and being suitably sensible that they could well reject him again.[23]

He was also very concerned over the dynastic situation. Being the only Ptolemy alive might be a useful matter of personal security, but dynastically it might lead to disaster if he died suddenly. The birth of an heir to Kleopatra II in 144, called Ptolemy Memphites from his place of birth, clearly assisted his position.[24] Then in 141/140 he married his niece Kleopatra III, the eldest daughter of Philometor and Kleopatra II.[25] As the eldest daughter of a king she was too valuable to be allowed to marry anyone else; of course, the marriage was ascribed to Ptolemy's lust by the moralizing writers—he receives perhaps the worst press of any of the Ptolemies[26]—but it did mean he had two simultaneous queens, his sister and his niece, an unusual, even unprecedented, situation, even amongst the Ptolemaic royal house. The condemnation by competitors merely indicated that they did not understand the dynastic imperatives driving him. The same practice can be

[22] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 195.
[23] T.B. Mitford, 'Seleucus and Theodorus', *Opuscula Atheniensis* I, 1953, 130–171.
[24] Diod. 33.13.
[25] Justin 38.8.5; Livy, *Periochae* 59.
[26] J. Whitehorne, *Cleopatras*, London 1994, 106–109.

seen among the Seleukids and the Pontic kings, without calling down public reprimands. There is no sign that Euergetes paid any heed, of course.

The two rival kingdoms, therefore, had quite enough to preoccupy themselves with in the decade after the deaths of Philometor and Alexander Balas, but both showed themselves capable, under able kings, of operating competently. After the disasters of the civil war and the loss of the eastern lands Antiochos VII had to pursue the same programme as his brother, in recovering control in Syria and reconquering the east. He learned from his brother's experience and sorted out Syria before marching off to the east. Ptolemy VIII, having watched and competed with his brother for three decades, had also clearly learned that conciliation in some circumstances, as in Cyprus, was a more sensible policy than brutality and coercion, but he was still liable to resort to the latter when foiled. Both kings organized culls of their most adamant opponents, but this was standard practice and fully expected.

Another legacy of Ptolemy Philometor's war affected the land he had hoped to acquire, for Koile Syria, which the dynasties had fought over for a century and a half, had now, under the impact of the latest of these wars, begun to fragment. From the time of Alexander the Great to that of Demetrios I Koile Syria had been a single geographical region, no matter who ruled it, but in the last half-century, under Seleukid rule, changes were happening. Partly this was due to the passage of time, and to the growth of the cities in size, number, and wealth, and to the increase in the rural population. For, despite being the bone of contention, the land itself had rarely been damaged. Alexander the Great had, of course, been his usual brutal self in Syria, and the campaigns of Ptolemy I had been unpleasant, but from 300 onwards until Antiochos III's two campaigns it had peace. And Antiochos' campaigns had been relatively brief, consisting mainly of surrenders rather than sieges. The fighting in the Seventh War had been mainly in the north, with the exception of that between Jonathan and Apollonios Taos which led to the destruction of Azotos. The Jewish campaigns in Judaea and round about had been the worst, with a tradition of devastation and depopulation which may not have been accurately recalled by the later historians, but does imply a general hostility of which Azotos may have been typical.

The generally expanding economy of the Hellenistic world was fuelled by a more sensible taxation regime, government spending instead of the hoarding which the Akhaimenids went in for, and by easier access to distant lands. These had encouraged the expansion of the cities, both

those already existing in the Persian time (the Phoenician cities especially) and those founded by the Seleukids.[27] This is particularly noticeable in the former no-man's-land of the upper valleys of the Eleutheros and the Orontes, between the opposed fortified regions of Apameia, the great Seleukid military base, and the Ptolemaic lines of Gerrha-Brochoi, a region which also included the north Phoenician coast (which had been a major sufferer in Antiochos III's campaigns, and again from Tryphon's destruction of Berytos). It is in the Seleukid period after 198 BC that this region, no longer liable to be invaded, saw considerable growth. The small towns along the Seleukid section of the Orontes—Laodikeia-ad-Libanum, Arethusa, Emesa, and others—the villages in the northern Bekaa (the Ptolemaic section), including that which became the shrine city of Baalbek, and the Phoenician towns along the northern Phoenician coast, all appear later as considerable towns and cities, and their initial development clearly took place in the second century.[28] But well-populated cities, full of Greek-speaking people, were not necessarily amenable to easy royal control. The Seleukid system of *epistatai*—men who were royal agents in the cities and civic communicators with the kings—was fairly successful, though it never worked with Arados or Jerusalem, and the erratic behaviour of the Antiochene population in the Seventh Syrian War suggests that it was capable of being easily swayed politically. And a fairly loose royal control, in a period of royal weakness or disorder, might quickly result in the complete independence of a city.

The real problem, of course, was the dynastic disputes, which blurred everyone's loyalties, allowed enemies to enter the land, and gave a handle to internal dissidents who were interested more in their own concerns and ambitions than those of the kingdom as a whole. In Koile Syria these contradictory Seleukid loyalties were further complicated by some residual Ptolemaic loyalty and by the conflict in Judaea between insurgents and loyalists and between Maccabees and Seleukids. It had been the Maccabean insurgents in Judaea who had been the most persistent recently in the manipulation of disputing Seleukids, though Arados had not abandoned its long ambition to increase its area of political action. The problem for such dissident communities was that the army of the

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[27] The expansion of the Hellenistic economy is not usually explicitly described, but it is evident that it happened: consider the difference between Western Asia under the Akhaimenids and the wealth extracted from the same area by Rome.

[28] Growth of new cities: Grainger, *Cities*, ch. 5.

kings was always more powerful than any of the dissidents' forces. Arados had been abruptly deprived of its *peraia* for some misdemeanor by Antiochos IV in 171, and a whole sequence of Maccabee brothers had all suffered in more direct confrontations. There was only one of these brothers left by the 130s.

Even by the 150s there had been only two of the six brothers left alive: Jonathan was then the senior, and he had kept his head down while Demetrios I ruled. The fighting during the Seventh War encouraged him to play one pretender off against another, and he had gained accessions of territory from Alexander—the city of Ekron and its territory—and Lydda, Apherema and Ramathaim from Demetrios II in return for ceasing the siege of the Akra in Jerusalem.[29] However, the unreliability which Jonathan thereby displayed left him distrusted by all. The Jewish army had also revealed an alarming willingness to destroy cities outside Judaea, notably at Azotos, sacked and burnt in 147.[30] By such behaviour and by making demands for expansion of territory, Jonathan revealed himself as being in effect just another military conqueror.

During the fighting between Diodotos/Tryphon and Demetrios, Jonathan continued to extort concessions. Diodotos, in the name of Antiochos VI, sent gifts and the confirmation of the earlier grants of land by both Alexander and Demetrios II. Simon, Jonathan's brother, was made commander over the non-Judaean part of Palestine by Diodotos, in the name of Antiochos VI. I *Maccabees* says his jurisdiction extended 'from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt',[31] though there is no indication of his actually exercising such authority. The practical problem, of course, was that much of this area was under the control of towns and cities loyal to Demetrios, so the power and authority implied was only potential—if it was actually granted and was not a figment of the Maccabean author's imagination. Demetrios, for example, minted throughout the war in Sidon, Tyre and Askelon, and only in 143 did Diodotos gain control of Ptolemais-Ake.[32] Simon's appointment was therefore an invitation to the two brothers to attack those cities; Diodotos' purpose was no doubt to free his hands to operate elsewhere—or it was a later justification for the campaigns by Simon and Jonathon which followed.

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[29] Ekron: I *Maccabees* 10.89; Jos., *AJ*. 13.102; Lydda etc: I *Maccabees* 11.28–37, a letter of Demetrios II to Jonathan; also Jos., *AJ*. 13.125–128.

[30] I Maccabees 10.84–87.

[31] I *Maccabees* 11.54–59; Jos., *AJ* 13.145–148.

[32] Houghton, 'Revolt of Tryphon', 140.

Jonathan brought up his army, presumably in support of Simon's position, against Askelon, which capitulated, but Gaza resisted for a time, and then made peace and gave hostages. Simon meanwhile besieged and took Bethzur.[33] This was a strategically important town thirty kilometres south of Jerusalem; control of this place permitted the Maccabees to block access to Jerusalem from that direction. Simon drove out the hostile inhabitants of Bethzur and installed a garrison in the town. Where Jonathan's conquests were presumably done in the name of Antiochos VI, Simon's were being done more directly in Jewish interests. It was clearly difficult to distinguish the actions of the two brothers: in fact, of course, they were working for Judaean interests first of all, and not those of their nominal king. Jonathan showed this even more clearly by soliciting a treaty of *amicitia* with Rome,[34] which was probably agreed, and by contacting Sparta, with a fictitious claim of ancestral kinship.[35]

These activities indicate a further effect of the victory of Ptolemy Philometor and the subsequent Seleukid civil war: the minor state of Judaea which had been tolerated by Antiochos IV and Lysias and Demetrios I was exploiting Seleukid difficulties to enlarge the autonomy of its rulers and acquire more territory. The same was, of course, being done at the same time by Mithradates of Parthia, and it was on the agendas of Ptolemaios of Kommagene and the city at Arados. But the Jewish actions were both more violent than those of Arados and Ptolemaios, and made from a weaker political and military base than that of Mithradates. Therefore it is not surprising that Jonathan was one of the victims of the war between Tryphon and Demetrios II. Having prevented a Demetrian army from invading Palestine, he then raided along the Orontes as far as the Eleutheros River, then he went to meet Tryphon at Ptolemais. Both men had large armies with them. Neither, clearly, trusted the other. Jonathan, with a bodyguard of a thousand men, and three thousand men held ready nearby, entered the city. Inside, however, and apparently at the initiative of the citizens rather than Tryphon, his bodyguard was massacred, and he was taken prisoner. The nearby troops were driven away.[36]

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33 I *Maccabees* 12.60–62; Jos., *AJ* 13.149–156.
34 I *Maccabees* 12.1–4; Jos., *AJ* 13.163.
35 I *Maccabees* 12.5–23; Jos., *AJ* 13.164–170.
36 I *Maccabees* 12.39–52; Jos., *AJ* 13.187–193.

The reaction of the citizens of Ptolemais-Ake marks one of several similar reactions against the Jewish conquests. Simon had already placed a garrison in Joppa in order to block a plan to hand the city over to Demetrios. No doubt Tryphon appreciated the temper of the Greeks of the cities, and could also be expected to be nervous of the sudden growth of Jewish power. The news of Jonathan's captivity stimulated greater Greek resistance,[37] which Tryphon could harness for his own purposes. His purpose, of course, was to extend his own authority over those areas still loyal to Demetrios by posing as their protector against the Jewish forces he had himself encouraged. He failed to bring Jonathan's successor Simon to battle, and Simon held on to Joppa, whose inhabitants he expelled.[38] Tryphon had Jonathan executed.[39] Simon now switched his support to Demetrios who in response agreed to a degree of autonomy, which I *Maccabees* regards as the achievement of independence.[40] This interpretation was somewhat premature, and it was not that of either Demetrios or Tryphon, nor, as it proved, of Antiochos VII.

When Antiochos VII removed Tryphon in 138, therefore, it was against Simon that he next moved. Simon had used the continuing civil war to force the surrender of the Seleukid garrison in Jerusalem (whose supplies Tryphon had been unable to replenish).[41] Antiochos had then driven Tryphon into Dor, on the Palestinian coast, and had shown his purposes by rejecting Simon's assistance in this siege. His programme, with Tryphon now on the defensive, was to restore Seleukid authority from Gaza to the Taurus. He demanded the return of conquered lands, or the payment of a huge indemnity. Simon refused both alternatives, which would have required his acknowledgement of Seleukid suzerainty, at least. His forces defeated the subsequent attack by a Seleukid detachment.[42]

Antiochos, despite the defeat of his general and army, ignored Simon for a time after he had eliminated Tryphon. One must assume that some unrecorded understanding was reached, perhaps on the lines of a truce in which each would hold what he held. Certainly one of Simon's conquests, the coastal city of Joppa, remained in his control, as did the

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[37] I *Maccabees* 12.53; Jos., *AJ* 13.195.
[38] I *Maccabees* 13.11; Jos., *AJ* 13.202.
[39] I *Maccabees* 13.12–24; Jos., *AJ* 13.203–212.
[40] I *Maccabees* 13.34–42; Jos., *AJ* 13.213.
[41] I *Maccabees* 13.49–53; Jos., *AJ* 13.215.
[42] I *Maccabees* 16.1–17 and 1.25–16.10; Jos., *AJ* 13.223–227.

three fortresses of Bethzur, Gazara, and Jerusalem. If this so, it was probably regarded by both rulers as lasting until one of them died; it must also, given the aims of Antiochos, have included some acknowledgement of inferiority by Simon.

In 134, however, Simon was murdered by his son-in-law and was succeeded by his remaining son John, called Hyrkanos.[43] Any agreement was therefore now void, and here was a situation in which the internal divisions in Judaea gave the newly reunited Seleukid kingdom the chance to intervene decisively, a welcome change from the usual situation of determined Jews exploiting Seleukid divisions. Antiochos brought up his full army to Jerusalem and besieged the city. If there had been an agreement between Antiochos VII and Simon, of course, diplomatic convention now cancelled it; the timing of Antiochos' attack, together with the absence of fighting between the defeat of Antiochos' general and Simon's death implies an agreement between the rulers in which Antiochos' honour, and perhaps Simon's, was involved.[44] The result of these new attacks was a comprehensive defeat for the Maccabaean state, and the reduction of John Hyrkanos to the status of a Seleukid governor. By leaving him in position, however, Antiochos was in effect recognizing Judaea as an hereditary subject-principality.[45]

Antiochos, just like his brother, was concerned about the steadily worsening situation in the east, where the Parthians had now expanded their control northwards from central Babylonia into Mesopotamia. As John Hyrkanos did not give in easily, it was more convenient to allow him to buy autonomy with a large indemnity and the dismantling of the fortifications of Jerusalem. Hyrkanos even kept his father's conquests of Joppa and Gazara, but he had to pay a heavy tribute for them. It was not worth Antiochos' time to destroy the new Jewish state (which had existed for a generation by then, long enough to be regarded as a fixture). The effort involved in physical conquest would cause much destruction of Jewish and Greek lives and property. He could see that Judaea was hardly rich and powerful; milking it of what little wealth it had was

[43] I *Maccabees* 16.11–17; Jos., *AJ* 13.228.

[44] I *Maccabees* skips from the defeat of Antiochos' attack to the murder of Simon, a period of four years; Josephus, dependent here on I *Maccabees*, does the same. The idolisation of Simon by the Maccabean author would be enough to explain the omission of an agreement with the enemy, while Simon's peaceful last years are emphasised—but he was at peace because Antiochos did not attack.

[45] Jos., *AJ* 13.236–248; Diod. 34/35.1.1–5.

more satisfactory. And Hyrkanos, having accepted Antiochos' suzerainty, became liable to supply troops as well as tribute. This he did for the eastern expedition.[46]

The period from 147 to 134, therefore, saw the Judaean state reach some sort of international acceptance, but only as a subordinate of the overarching Seleukid kingdom. In this it had the same status as Arados on its island, and the former province of Kommagene, whose governor was succeeded in about 130 by his son Samos, thereby indicating that the land was partly detached from Seleukid direct control—Samos appears to have taken the royal title soon after that, which is a clear indication of his independence.[47] (The city of Edessa, just a day's journey from the Euphrates crossing at Zeugma, was ruled by a dynasty which reckoned its era from 132 BC, which suggests an opportunistic move by the founder when the two ends of Mesopotamia were under rival kings).[48] To the east of Judaea another new kingdom, that of the Nabataeans, had been forced to constitute itself, partly because of Jewish attacks across the Jordan in earlier years. These had required the local inhabitants, nomads and farmers, to develop a more organised state system than they had before to protect them; their formal king, the Seleukid ruler, had proved unable to defend them.[49] Note that these minor states, however they began—as provinces, as rural rebels, as nomads, as cities—all found it necessary to adopt the current model of Hellenistic political and military organization in order both to survive and to gain recognition.

Antiochos spent five years (138–134) sorting out the conditions in Syria, defeating rebels, and establishing his suzerainty over the surrounding minor states. By removing Tryphon he had eliminated, so he thought, the challenge from the alternative royal line descended from Antiochos IV. But by his own actions in making himself king when his brother was taken prisoner, he had partly reinstated the problem. At least he had not murdered all his brother's children—there were two sons and a daughter—but he and Kleopatra Thea had five children of their own (three sons and two daughters), so there were again plenty, even a superfluity, of possible complications in the succession. Like Antiochos IV he was a vigorous and successful king; but he was still a usurper. The

46 Jos., *AJ* 13.249–251.
47 *OGIS* 396.
48 J.B. Segal, *Edessa, The Blessed City*, Oxford 1970.
49 For a summary history, cf. Schurer, vol. 1, App. II.

legitimate king was still Demetrios II, alive and resentful, and as a prisoner he was a standing threat to Antiochos' position, wielded by the Parthians.

Relations between Seleukids and Ptolemies, by contrast, appear to have been peaceful in the 130s, mainly no doubt because both Ptolemy VIII, Euergetes II, and Antiochos VII were fully occupied in holding on to power at home. Also the two kings had different ambitions: Euergetes was not aggressive at any time, apparently being satisfied to be ruling Egypt, whereas Antiochos was intent on recovering the lost lands of the east. The two men thereby personified in their own policies those of their respective dynasties—defensive Ptolemies, expansionist Seleukids. The main problem both kings faced was not so much in government or their external enemies as in their own families.

The purge by Euergetes II when he took power had adversely affected one of Ptolemy VI's commanders, Galestes, a son of the Athamanian king in Greece. He took a leaf out of the book of Alexander Balas, found a suitable child, and then announced that he was the tutor to the boy, who was a son of Philometor. He gathered a group of other exiles and attempted a *coup* in Egypt. Euergetes was saved by his *strategos* Hierax, (not Philometor's old commander in Antioch), who paid the wages of disaffected mercenaries and so kept them loyal.[50] This problem had therefore been solved when another Roman, P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, the conqueror and destroyer of Carthage, arrived in 139 on one of the Senate's investigatory missions around the eastern Mediterranean lands.[51] The timing, after the defeat of Galestes and just as Antiochos VII was suppressing Tryphon, was well chosen.

The trio of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes and his two wives, mother and daughter, held together into the 130s, but it was an inherently unstable relationship. Euergetes was disliked by the Alexandrians, who mocked him for his obesity and ugliness, and he had partly responded to this by favouring native Egyptians in official positions. This, given their propensity to rebel, was anyway a sensible conciliatory policy, similar to his policy in Cyprus, but it also gave him alternative support in the *chora*

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[50] Diod. 33.20; *Pros. Ptol.*, 2155, 10070a, 14595 (Galestes); 264, 2163 (Hierax); Viesse, 47–48; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 196.

[51] Diod. 33.28b; Poseidonios, *FGrH* 87 F 6; Justin 38.8.8–11; A. Lampela, *Rome and the Ptolemies of Egypt*, Helsinki 1998, 200–204; A.E. Astin, 'Diodoros and the Date of the Embassy to the East of Scipio Aemilianus', *Classical Philology* 54, 1959, 221–227; A.E. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, Oxford 1967.

to set against the hostility of the Alexandrians. So, when the tension inside the royal family broke out into public conflict, the internal royal and *chora*–city tensions coalesced and the whole Ptolemaic state collapsed.

The conflict began about November 132 between those who favoured rule by Euergetes and those who took the side of Kleopatra II, his sister. (Kleopatra III stayed loyal to her husband, not to her mother.) The conflict was a result of Euergetes' attempts to oust Kleopatra II, but she was apparently fully a match for him in intrigue. The trigger for the open fighting was probably the fact that Ptolemy Memphites, the son of Euergetes and Kleopatra II, was approaching the age at which he could be associated as a co-ruler—or even become king, if Euergetes should suffer an accident. The *coup* was organized by Kleopatra II, and was confined at first to Alexandria, where it was eventually sufficiently violent that the royal palace was burned (late in 131); Euergetes and Kleopatra III fled to Cyprus.[52]

It was at this point that Euergetes' earlier policy of favouring the Egyptian native population proved especially useful to him. One result of the turmoil in Alexandria was the rebellion of an Egyptian man called Harsiese, who seized control of Thebes for a time and was proclaimed pharaoh. But the governor-general of the Thebaid was an Egyptian, Paos, who was able to combat the rebellion, and in his own person demonstrated the alternative to a native rebellion, at least for those Egyptians of wealth and education. Harsiese was driven from Thebes, but he held out for another year in Middle Egypt.[53]

In Cyprus, Euergetes persuaded Ptolemy Memphites to join him (from Cyrene), and then had him killed and dismembered, sending his severed limbs to the boy's mother in Alexandria. Kleopatra displayed the pieces

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[52] Justin 38.8.11–18; Livy, *Periochae* 59; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 197–198; L. Mooren, 'The Wives and Children of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II', *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology, Athens 1986*, Athens 1988, 435–444; O. Mørkholm, 'Ptolemaic coins and Chronology, the Dated silver coins of Alexandria', *ANSMN* 20, 1975, 7–24.

[53] Harsiese: Viesse 48–52; L. Koenen, 'Theoisin echtros. Ein einheimischer Gegenkönig in Agypten (132/1)a)' *Chron. Eg.* 34, 68, 1959, 103–119; R.S. Bagnall, 'An unrecognised date by the rebellion of 131 BC', *ZPE* 56, 1984, 58–60; R. Bogaert, 'Un cas de faux en écriture à la banque royal thebaine en 13 avant J.-C.', *Chron. Eg.*, 63, 125, 1988, 145–154; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 198–199; Pos: L. Mooren, 'The governors general of the Thebaid in the Second Century BC', *Ancient Society* 5, 1974, 137–152; J.D. Thomas, 'The epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, 1: the Ptolemaic epistrategos', *P. Coln 6*, Opladen 1975; K. Vandorpe, 'Die fruheste Beleg eines Strategen der Thebais als Epistrategen', *ZPE* 75, 1983, 47–50.

to the people, then had herself proclaimed sole ruler and began a new era, in which the year 1 was 132/131.[54] But Euergetes had plenty of support in the *chora*, and was back in control of Memphis by the spring of 130, though the governor-general of the Thebaid, Paos, was still fighting to gain control of the city of Hermopolis, south of Thebes, for most of 130.[55] The civil war in 131–130 therefore involved Euergetes in fighting both a native pharaoh in the south and his own estranged (first) wife in Alexandria. Harsiese was suppressed by the end of 130, but the stalemate in the north lasted until at least 127.

In Syria the news of trouble in Egypt had its effect on the plans of Antiochos VII. In about 133 Ptolemy VIII Euergetes had taken the further epithet 'Tryphon'.[56] In the Ptolemaic context, of course, this harks back to the devotion to Dionysos of the time of Ptolemy III and IV. The word has connotations of revelry and luxuriousness, even magnificence, but in the context of the 130s it also refers to the throne name taken by Diodotos of Kasiana in his defiance of Demetrios II, and as the successor of the royal line of Antiochos IV and V and Alexander Balas and Antiochos VI. So when Euergetes took this new title it may have been a reference to these Ptolemaic ancestors, but it must also have been seen in both Syria and Egypt as a revival of the Ptolemaic claims to Koile Syria. There is no sign that Euergetes had any plans to do anything about it, but the implied threat was there.[57]

Such an implied threat was something Antiochos VII had to take into consideration when making his own plans for an expedition eastwards. He had shown a clear and careful deliberation in his policy, sorting out the situation in Syria and Palestine first, before making any moves towards the east. A threat from Egypt might persuade him to scotch it somehow again before turning to the east, perhaps by invading Egypt (as Antiochos IV had done), perhaps by stimulating a rebellion (as Ptolemy Philometor had done to his father). So the collapse of the Ptolemaic state into conflict and rebellion from 132 was very convenient to him. Whether he had anything to do with it is not known, but one

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54 Justin 38.8.13–15; Diod. 34/35.14.

55 Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 197–199.

56 H. Heinen, 'Die Tryphe des Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes II', *Historia* Einzelschriften 40, 116–127; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 285.

57 W. Otto and H. Bengtson, *Zur Geschichte des Niedergangs des Ptolemäerreiches*, Munich 1938, 47–48, suggest Ptolemy was more ambitious in this than the evidence of a mere title would justify, but the resonances of this particular title bear considering.

is surely entitled to one's suspicions, since he seemed at the time to be a major beneficiary. It would, of course, only be paying Egypt back for Philometor's interferences.

So, in 131, when Antiochos VII marched against Parthia, he could be confident in his control of Syria, and that there was no threat from preoccupied Egypt. The expedition began well, and Antiochos quickly recovered Babylonia and much of Media. The campaign continued into the winter of 130/129, when Antiochos' army took up winter quarters in Media. He had even invaded the old Parthian satrapy, a region which had not seen a Seleukid king since Antiochos III in 210. Neither Antiochos IV nor Demetrios II had penetrated so far east. The people no longer had any memory of or loyalty to the Seleukid state and king, and the Seleukid army made itself unpopular by its requisitions and looting—it was, of course, in enemy territory and was behaving as any army did. The real problem, however, was that Antiochos separated himself from his men. He was killed in an ambush and many of his men died in the rising against their presence which followed.

By then, the Parthian king, Phraates II, was sufficiently desperate to release his prisoner, Demetrios. This attempt to distract Antiochos became redundant as soon as he was killed, but Demetrios, who had twice attempted to escape before, this time succeeded.[58] He returned to Syria, therefore, at the moment when the kingdom was distracted by the loss of the army and the popular king, and when the Ptolemaic kingdom was equally distracted by the inability of either Ptolemy Euergetes or Kleopatra II to prevail in their civil war. The two crises rapidly coalesced, producing yet another Syrian War.

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[58] Jos., *AJ* 13.249–253; Justin 38.10; Athenaios 210d and 540b–c; T. Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Partherkreig Antiochos VII*, dissertation, Tubingen 1970.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# THE EIGHTH WAR: THE LAST CHANCE FOR UNION

The issue of the possible union of the two kingdoms had been raised back in 168 by Antiochos IV's campaigns in Egypt, if only as a Roman nightmare; it had been alive, and even attempted briefly, in 146/145 by Ptolemy Philometor, but in the end it had been rejected by him and by his followers. With the intermarriages between the two royal families—Ptolemy V and Kleopatra Syra, Kleopatra Thea severally with Alexander Balas, Demetrios II, and Antiochos VII (and Demetrios II reclaimed his wife once again in 129 when he returned to Syria), the issue of the union of the crowns would never go away, largely because of the role of the royal women in validating a man's kingship. This had been a Ptolemaic matter originally, when Ptolemy II married his full sister Arsinoe, possibly under the influence of pharaonic practice, more likely out of the curious assumption that he and his family were extra-special and their blood had to remain within the family. The practice reached into the Seleukid family when Laodike, the daughter of Antiochos III, successively married her three brothers, Antiochos the Son, Seleukos IV, and Antiochos IV, while Demetrios I's wife seems to have been his sister Laodike.[1] Even before that, the Seleukids had tended to marry cousins. The Antigonids followed much the same practices as well.

This was, of course, a dangerous genetic practice, but these royal families managed to conduct exogamous relations as well as endogamous ones, more or less alternating one with the other every generation, with beneficial genetic results.[2] Even the repeated endogamous Ptolemaic unions do not seem to have impaired the intelligence or ability of the rulers. The capabilities of the successive royal generations never flagged. Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II might be fat and slow and ugly, a figure of fun and detestation to many of the Alexandrians, but he was also intelligent and capable and ruthless, and the last of the Ptolemaic line, Kleopatra VII, was clearly also intelligent and capable. In the Seleukid

[1] For the argument on this see Ogden, *Polygamy*, *passim*.
[2] C.D. Darlington, *The Evolution of Man and Society*, London 1969.

family, the children of Demetrios I, the product of two generations of brother-sister marriages, were clearly energetic and of considerable abilities.

The intermarriage of the two royal families was perhaps inevitable. They were politically and socially several cuts above every other family, and the destruction of the Antigonids in 167 left no other family in a similar condition, though the Seleukids were more likely than the Ptolemies to marry less important royals—the royal houses of Pontos, Kappadokia, and Armenia are examples. From the mid-second century, the number of other royal families gradually diminished—the Macedonian royalty vanished in 167, the Attalids in 133, many of the Greek Baktrians about the same time—and their obvious successors, the Roman nobility, were even more standoffish in their marriage customs than the Seleukids and the Ptolemies. So far as can be seen it was only with the last Hellenistic ruler, Kleopatra VII, that marriage between a Roman and that ruler took place—and the Roman people's reaction was a major factor in Antony's destruction. But intermarriage between the greater royal families is not just a matter of identifying those of sufficient social prestige for association, it also brought with it prospects of inheritance. When Ptolemy VI was offered the Seleukid diadem in Antioch in the summer of 145, it was surely partly because he was a Seleukid on his mother's side, the son of Kleopatra Syra and grandson of Antiochos III; his competitors were two Seleukids, one of whom was of the line of the usurper Antiochos IV, and the other, Demetrios II, was of the legitimate line, but was unpopular—though both were also descended from Antiochos III.

The marriages of Kleopatra Thea to, first, Alexander Balas, and then Demetrios II, had reinforced that dynastic link. Then on Antiochos VII's arrival to take over the Seleukid kingdom when his brother was captured, he married Kleopatra Thea as her third husband, thus making it clear that the kingship was in part in her gift. Further, she was the daughter of Ptolemy Philometor. The new king did not kill off his predecessor's children (Demetrios and Kleopatra Thea had at least three children), but then Antiochos and Kleopatra had five children of their own, so that, by 131, when Antiochos set off on his eastward march, there were seven or eight children of the Seleukid house alive. This might imply that the succession was safe, as in a sense it was; in fact, it actually meant it became the subject of a new round of familial disputes.[3]

[3] While imprisoned by the Parthians, Demetrios had been married to a Parthian princess, Rhodogune, by whom he had two children (App., *Syr.* 68); they could be

The harmony in the Seleukid house under Antiochos VII—much assisted by the absence of Demetrios II—was in strong contrast to the disorder among the Ptolemies, which developed into one of the civil war from 132 onwards. The number of Seleukid children was also a contrast to their paucity in the Ptolemaic house. But the two were now inexorably linked, which as another factor in the possible union of the two kingdoms.

When Demetrios II returned to Syria in 129, therefore, after the death of Antiochos VII and the loss of much of his army, he was faced with a grieving population,[4] a wife who had come to detest him, and an international situation of considerable complexity. He had to re-establish himself as king, he had to cope with the return of the remnants of the Seleukid army,[5] sections of his kingdom had become more determined than ever to break for independence, and he soon received an appeal for help from Kleopatra II in Alexandria. The sheer quantity of problems would have daunted any man, even if he had not been recently released from an isolated and hostile prison.

Demetrios resumed his position as king, and while he had not been popular during his first reign, and was not popular now, with a certain political skill he could have maintained his position. But he was also no longer popular with his wife, and Kleopatra had a large brood of children whom she could use as replacement kings if she chose. One of her children by Demetrios, yet another Laodike, had been captured in the east when Antiochos was killed; she was taken into the harem of the Parthian king Phraates II, who thus, at least in theory, became yet another claimant through a royal woman;[6] one of her sons by Antiochos had also gone to the east and was probably now being brought up at the Parthian court 'as the son of a king';[7] that is, he was preserved, as Demetrios II had been, as a possible weapon for future use against him.

Demetrios might have been a prisoner in Iran for ten years, but his lifetime experience brought perspective. If any man had the necessary experience to bring an understanding of the political situation in the eastern Mediterranean in 129, it was Demetrios II. He had fought a

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said to be in the line of succession as well. One of Antiochos' sons had been captured by Phraates II.

4 Justin 39.1.1; Diod. 34.17.

5 Justin 42.1.4–5; Diod. 34.18.

6 Justin 38.10.10.

7 Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.257; Athenaios 153a (from Poseidonios); T. Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Partherkrieg Antiochos VII*, dissertation Tubingen, 199.

usurper (Alexander Balas) for his throne, he had fought another usurper (Tryphon) to keep it, he had fought invaders in his eastern provinces. He was the husband of a Ptolemaic princess whose father had been offered, and even briefly had held, the kingship he himself had now recovered. During his lifetime the kingdom of his Macedonian ancestors had been taken over as a Roman province, and that of one of the sponsors of his dynasty's enemy, the Attalid kingdom, had also been extinguished by Rome. As a result, Rome's boundary of control had extended during his lifetime from the Adriatic to within a few days' march of Syria (and a great Roman imperial highway, the Via Aquillia, was being organised across Asia Minor, to terminate at Side, only a day or two's march from Seleukid Kilikia, even as Demetrios escaped from imprisonment).[8] It was evident that Rome had changed from simply blocking and destroying rivals in the east to direct imperial expansion, as it had long been doing in Italy and Spain.

Demetrios had faced and beaten rebels in his own kingdom, though they had now revived thanks to the disaster which had overtaken his brother. So the current problems of the Greek East—native rebellions, the approach of Rome, the revival of Iran and the Iranians, repeatedly disputed successions, a serious loss of military manpower—were all encapsulated in his own life and reign. And he was still only about thirty years old. Not only that, but his personal life was a catalogue of deaths and desertions: his father and his father-in-law died in battle, his elder brother was murdered, his wife had cohabited happily with his younger brother, and that brother died in battle, his stepdaughter was now in the harem of the Parthian king, he had deserted his second wife (Rhodogune, a daughter of the Parthian king, provided for his consolation while in jail, by whom he had two children—more possible pretenders) and their children to recover his kingship. And he was now reunited with his first wife, who showed, by her later behaviour, that she hated him.

When he returned to Syria, Demetrios had a beard. This was a fairly unusual male fashion at the time. The coins produced in his second reign show that he had a long flowing beard, implying a rather older person than a thirty-year-old.[9] The beard was in fact the usual accoutrement

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[8] D.N. French, 'Sites and Inscriptions from Phrygia, Pisidia and Pamphylia', *Ep. Anat.* 17, 1991, 51–58 at 53–54.

[9] *British Museum Catalogue: Seleucid Kings of Syria*, London 1878, 77 and plate 21; a good reproduction is at plate 98 of N. Davis and C.M. Kraay, *The Hellenistic Kingdoms, Portrait Coins and History*, London 19873.

of Parthians, but in the Greek world it was that of philosophers, at least when they were sculpted, usually after they were dead. Demetrios' beard was a clear link to the supposed wisdom of the philosophers, a claim to experience (which he surely had) and wisdom (which he could only claim).

Demetrios had not been popular during his first reign, and was just as disliked when he returned, perhaps all the more so since he had escaped from the Parthians when so many soldiers had been killed. Further, at least two regions of Syria, perhaps three, took advantage of the shock of the death of Antiochos VII, the absence of his army, and the disruptive and unexpected arrival of Demetrios II, to move into independence. It was just about this time, or a little before Demetrios returned, that Ptolemaios' rule of Kommagene gave way to that of his son Samos, an inheritance unsanctioned but ignored by the Seleukid government. It seems to have happened while Antiochos was campaigning in the east, during 130. It was scarcely the most urgent problem facing the Seleukid government at the time, and if Samos could guarantee quiet he would be ignored; but now Samos took to calling himself king;[10] Arados used the governmental paralysis in Antioch in 129 to mount a swift and devastating assault on its mainland *peraia*, in which the cities of Marathos and Simyra were 'destroyed', which in this case meant that the populations were expelled or enslaved, while the lands thus acquired were divided amongst the Aradian citizens; Arados was now as a result an independent state, owing nothing to the Seleukid kingdom,[11] though a powerful king would certainly be able to suppress it, if he chose. Again, this was not the greatest problem facing Demetrios on his return. In Judaea John Hyrkanos returned from the east—he had commanded the Judaean contingent in the army of Antiochos VII, and had avoided the general massacre and capture[12]—and immediately, of course, the agreement he had made with Antiochos in 134 became void. Acting on that assumption, Hyrkanos now in effect claimed royal privilege, something which may have been granted his father by Antiochos VII. He set about expanding his power by conquering territories and peoples in carefully chosen directions—south and east principally. He carefully

[10] B.V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, Oxford 1911, 774.
[11] Strabo 16.2.12.
[12] Jos., *AJ* 13.249–253.

avoided attacking the Greek cities and regions,[13] and so was able to avoid a direct challenge to Demetrios II, though that challenge was inherent in all he did; but he, like Samos and Arados, could be ignored for the present.

The return of Demetrios to Syria and his re-assumption of his kingship and his wife coincided in time with the beleaguerment of Kleopatra Thea's mother Kleopatra II in Alexandria. Euergetes had recovered the *chora*, and had gradually eliminated all those areas outside Alexandria which had been holding out for his elder wife. If Euergetes took the city her fate would probably be death. In her desperation she appealed to Demetrios, who was her son-in-law; in exchange for rescuing her, she promised him the Egyptian kingship, something which was clearly regarded by her earlier husbands as in her gift, and to which he would also have a claim as the husband of Kleopatra Thea, the daughter of Ptolemy Philometor. This, of course, required Euergetes' own death first. For these rulers, the stakes in the civil war could not be higher. Euergetes' first action on being invited to succeed Philometor had been to marry this Kleopatra and to beget a son on her; his subsequent marriage to Kleopatra III, the daughter of Kleopatra II and Philometor, was also designed to reinforce his royal position, and to secure the royal claim of his niece so as to prevent others from acquiring it. No doubt this was the more important to him in view of his own personal unpopularity in Alexandria.[14] This practice had been transferred also to the Seleukid dynasty, where Kleopatra Thea's existence had something of the same effect, though not so powerfully as amongst the Ptolemies.

In theory Demetrios' main problem in foreign affairs should have been the war with Parthia, but here he had been rescued from the need to mount a new offensive by the fate and actions of his brother's army. Many of the soldiers quartered in eastern Iran had been captured by the Parthians. Others, like the Judaean contingent under John Hyrkanos, had escaped; possibly only a small number had been killed. Phraates, the Parthian king, was faced by an invasion from the east, where nomad Sakas had recently destroyed the Baktrian kingdom, and were now moving on to other areas; a substantial number of them eventually settled in Drangiana, which became Sakastene (now Seistan). It was the attacks by

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[13] Jos., *AJ* 13.254–258; Josephus claims that Hyrkanos 'marched against the cities of Syria', but not a single city is named in his subsequent account.

[14] Ogden, *Polygamy*, 96–98.

these enemies which had already repeatedly diverted the Parthian kings from conquering new lands to the west, and they had killed Mithradates ten years before. Phraates now used his captured Greek and Macedonian soldiers as part of his army to combat this next invasion. Unfortunately for him they turned on him and his Parthians in the first battle. He died, and the Sakas moved into his eastern provinces.[15] He was succeeded by his uncle Artabanos, whose first priority was clearly to fight his eastern enemies, and shore up his eastern frontier; he also died in battle soon after. Demetrios was thus able to ignore the Parthian problem for the time being.

Demetrios chose as his first priority to respond to the appeal of Kleopatra II by mounting an expedition into Egypt.[16] This has been greeted by historians with general amazement and incredulity, along the lines of why was he advancing into Egypt when there were so many other problems to be solved in his own kingdom?[17] But Demetrios was not acting irrationally, though he was certainly displaying the same personal order of priorities as in 141 when he left Tryphon in control of part of Syria and went off to fight off the Parthians. This time, he was making a sensible and intelligent move in the general political circumstances. The east was no longer an immediate problem, though the damage being sustained by the Parthian kingdom might have suggested the utility of an attack. The independence of Arados and Kommagene was never an issue; John Hyrkanos was busy in the south fighting wars against Idumaeans and others—but it took him six months to take the fairly minor town of Madaba,[18] so he was not a serious threat to the Seleukid kingdom. The Ptolemaic kingdom had been reduced to Egypt, Cyprus, and Cyrenaica, and was at the time divided between Euergetes and Kleopatra II, with the former deeply unpopular among the administrative and military and landowning classes, and the latter with little support in the *chora*. Demetrios' own Seleukid kingdom was reduced to Syria, part of Palestine, and an indeterminate territory in Mesopotamia eastwards towards the Tigris. In geostrategic terms a union of the two kingdoms made even more sense in 129 than it had in 145, and this time they were both so reduced in power and territory

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15 Justin 42.1.4–5; Diod. 34.18.
16 Justin 39.1.1–5; Jos., *AJ* 13.267–268.
17 E.g., by Justin 39.1.2.
18 Jos., *AJ* 13.255.

that even Rome might not object. If Demetrios could win Egypt he would at least end the rule of the deeply unpleasant Ptolemy VIII Euergetes, while the union could release sufficient energies and manpower to recover Babylonia and Iran. Demetrios II was therefore grasping at the greater prize in order to make the acquisition of the lesser prizes easier.

Exactly what personal arrangement Kleopatra II had in mind though for Demetrios is not known. He was already married to her own daughter (and to a Parthian princess as well); she may have intended to marry him herself, or to transfer Kleopatra III from Euergetes to Demetrios, in place of, or in addition to, Kleopatra Thea. The question is moot, because she was competing with a cunning, devious and clever schemer in Euergetes, who was even more effective at such arts than she was, and she may have ignored Kleopatra Thea in all her schemes.

Kleopatra Thea, with perhaps six children still in her care, was a problem Demetrios and Kleopatra II ignored at their peril. There is no sign that she had been politically active earlier: her one personal-cum-political decision had been to welcome Antiochos VII in 138, and marry him, though this had been of great importance. It had provided him with some legitimacy, but as the brother of the captured king, he had a charisma of his own. In legal terms, if such a concept could be said to exist, Demetrios II's eldest son Seleukos should have taken power, but he was no more than an infant; Antiochos VII was clearly in position in part as the child's guardian, in the same way as Antiochos IV with the children of Seleukos IV, though this was scarcely a happy or encouraging precedent.

Kleopatra II's scheme for Demetrios, whatever it was (and it must have required his marriage to someone else, at least), was a clear threat to the position of Kleopatra Thea and her children by both the Demetrios and Antiochos. The obvious ploy for Kleopatra II would be to marry her daughter Kleopatra III to Demetrios, thus eliminating Euergetes, removing Kleopatra III to Syria (presumably), and leaving her to rule in Egypt herself while Demetrios went off to fight the Parthians. In such a scheme there was no room for Kleopatra Thea, and given the propensity to murder in the Ptolemaic royal family, she could expect an early death. This, to be sure, is speculation, but it is the necessary background for which to account for what happened next.

The chronology of events is reasonably clear. Demetrios returned to Syria in spring 129 at the latest, Antiochos having died early in that year (for his troops were still scattered at winter quarters when he was

ambushed).[19] Kleopatra II appealed to him some time after his return, but only after he had re-established himself in Syria, so perhaps in late 129.[20] He did not mount his expedition into Egypt until the spring of 128. This is a reasonable timeframe, since one must expect some negotiations to have taken place between Demetrios and the queen, and he would need to gather an army.

The Eighth Syrian War may therefore be said to have begun when Demetrios began his march into Egypt in the spring of 128. His aim was primarily to rescue his mother-in-law, who was penned up in Alexandria at the time, but his underlying purpose was obviously to become king of both kingdoms, as offered by Kleopatra II; Demetrios' enemy was therefore Ptolemy Euergetes, and if he succeeded he would be king of a realm reaching from Cyrenaica and Lower Egypt to that part of Mesopotamia which was not yet under Parthian rule. This episode is not usually considered to be a 'Syrian War', but that is what it amounts to—it was, after all, a war between the Seleukid king and the Ptolemaic king; it was, of course, an outgrowth of the civil war in Egypt, and it developed into a civil war in Seleukid Syria, but it involved the control of both countries. After all, since 170, the prize in these wars was not just Syria—Koile Syria, that is—but all Syria and all Egypt.

In all this there is little or no sign that anyone paid any attention to Rome. There is a brief note in a summary of Livy's 59th book,[21] which is thought to reflect a discussion in the Senate, possibly provoked by an appeal from Euergetes when originally driven from Alexandria in 131. But the book also covers the fighting around Numantia in Spain, the crisis in Rome over the murder of Ti. Gracchus, the inheritance of Asia and the 'rebellion' by Aristonikos, a war which lasted until 129. Rome had enough to attend to without interfering in the civil war in Egypt. And as it happened the threat to Euergetes from Demetrios proved to be only brief. Like his brother Philometor Euergetes was able to get out of trouble by his own efforts.

In actual fact it was neither Euergetes nor Rome who stopped Demetrios. Euergetes probably did not yet know much of the arrangements between Demetrios and Kleopatra II, though the arrival of Demetrios' army on Egypt's border was a clear threat. The risk for Euergetes was

[19] Justin 39.10.8–10.
[20] Justin 39.9.1.
[21] Livy, *Periochae* 59.

that Kleopatra II's revival would rekindle the fighting within Egypt, while Demetrios, proclaiming that his mission was to rescue the queen, would be able to succeed in reaching Alexandria fairly easily, presumably defeating Euergetes' forces on the way. Demetrios marched his army from Antioch through Syria and Palestine and Sinai as far as the eastern gate of Egypt at Pelusion.

What stopped Demetrios from going any farther was partly the problem of Pelusion, a major fortress which had to be captured before his invading army could safely enter Egypt, but which, by resisting, forced Demetrios' army to camp in the desert. His troops were perhaps relatively small in number, given the losses in the east and Demetrios' unpopularity, and given his possible perception that he would find considerable support in Egypt. The soldiers were clearly unhappy, even with the prospect of Egyptian loot before them. Yet the real problem for Demetrios was the basic instability of his own position within Syria. Behind him his wife proclaimed a new king, and in his camp before Pelusion the soldiers mutinied.[22]

The evidence for this is mainly numismatic. A group of coins issued from the Antioch mint at this time was produced in the name of a young king Antiochos VIII Epiphanes, depicted as a chubby-cheeked child. This was the second son of Demetrios and Kleopatra Thea, who eventually became king in 125, at the age of eighteen at the most. But the royal portrait on this small group of coins—only seven in silver are known to exist, some of them tetradrachms and some drachms—shows a child, one who had not yet developed the notably hooked nose which later gave Antiochos the nickname of Grypos ('hook-nose'). It is theorised that these were coins which were issued before Antiochos' definitive accession as king in 125, on an occasion when the young Antiochos was proclaimed king, but for only a short time.[23] One occasion when this intervention was possible was in the gap in time between the arrival of the news of Antiochos VII's death and the physical arrival of the refugee Demetrios II fleeing from his imprisonment, though the timing of events seems to put the arrival of Demetrios and of the news of his brother's death more or less simultaneous. Another possibility, the occasion favoured by the two men who published the coins and discussed them, is in the year after,

[22] Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.257.

[23] A. Houghton and G. Le Rider, 'Un premier règne d'Antiochos VIII à Antioche en 128', *BCH* 112, 1988, 401–411.

128, when Demetrios II, having marched as far as Pelusion, had to turn back because, as the historian Justin notes, Antioch and then Apameia defected from him.[24]

The first of these possibilities is unlikely. Antiochos died somewhere in Iran, by which time Demetrios was already on his way to the west. He had already made two escape attempts only to be foiled, in one case right at the frontier; he was not going to delay his third flight, having finally got away by permission of the Parthian king, and it is therefore very probable that he outran the news of Antiochos' death in reaching Syria. Coins in the name of Antiochos VIII Epiphanes could hardly have been produced at Antioch in the time. This was obviously the place to which Demetrios naturally went first.

The second possibility, that Antiochos was proclaimed king in opposition to his father during the expedition against Egypt, also has problems. First, the boy was in his early teens, having been born early in the period 145–141: his parents were married in 145 and were separated by Demetrios' expedition to the east from 141, and they had three children, of whom Antiochos was the second. The portrait certainly fits a child of that age, but it seems highly unlikely that he would have been able to act by himself at that age. So he was put forward as king by backers, of whom the obvious one is his mother, Kleopatra Thea. Three years later, after Demetrios' death, it was she who put Antiochos on the throne a second time, this time successfully, and then her portrait appears on the coins along with his, and on some emissions her head even appears alone. It would be reasonable that, if anyone, she should promote him in 128. The other problem is that Antiochos was her *second* son by Demetrios, so why did she promote him, and not the older son Seleukos? It might be that Seleukos was with his father on the Egyptian expedition; perhaps more likely, Antiochos was more amenable to the scheme. In 126, when Seleukos inherited the kingship after Demetrios II died, she soon had him murdered in order to bring Antiochos to the throne.

Exactly what happened in Syria while Demetrios was attacking Egypt is as unclear as most of the details of these wars. Kleopatra II was in Alexandria, but most of the rest of Egypt had come under Euergetes' control by 128. Clearly the intervention of an army under Demetrios' command would jeopardize that control, and may well have been the last chance for Kleopatra II to regain power. The delay of Demetrios' army

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[24] Justin 39.1.3 (though he ascribes the result to 'Tryphon', by then long dead; could this be a reference to Euergetes' recently added title?).

before Pelusion therefore gave everyone time to act. The revolt of Antioch and Apameia probably saved Euergetes in 128, for the proclamation of the boy Antiochos as king required that Demetrios turn around and go back to Syria: the mutiny in the army must be seen as part of the rebellion against him, instigated either by the news from Antioch, or by Kleopatra Thea directly. The risings in Antioch in particular would inevitably be in the name of a king other than Demetrios, for that is how politics worked in the Seleukid state. Demetrios' military adventure was already in trouble by being stopped at Pelusion, so turning round and returning to Syria when he was stabbed in the back by his wife and his son would be a wholly acceptable excuse for failure. But the mutiny among the soldiers was as persuasive.

Euergetes, however, was not yet safe. Kleopatra II still held out in Alexandria, and he will have understood that Demetrios was likely to win the contest in Syria as soon as he returned to Antioch. Demetrios' opponents in Syria were now equally desperate, and they asked that Ptolemy send them 'someone of the family of Seleukos'.[25] It is thus worth noting that the initiative in the next series of events came from neither Ptolemy nor Kleopatra Thea, but from a group in Syria who were hostile to Demetrios but not aligned with Kleopatra Thea either—for she had had her own candidate to replace Demetrios. And they wanted a Seleukid as their alternative to either Demetrios or his son.

It would seem that Ptolemy had no particular man available, and indeed it is not clear exactly what the appellants expected, but the idea clearly appealed. Ptolemy therefore concocted a scheme which would preoccupy Demetrios for a good deal longer than merely suppressing his wife's *coup*, and once again he reached into his family's recent history to find a scheme. He produced another usurper called Alexander, and this time he was as transparently non-royal as Galestes' candidate for Euergetes own throne a few years earlier.

Euergetes had recruited an Egyptian youth, the son of a merchant called Protarchos, named him Alexander, and proclaimed that he was a son of Alexander Balas.[26] An alternative is that he was described as an adopted son of Antiochos VII,[27] but the former is the more persuasive, and so the more likely pretence, since an adopted son would have no claim as against the several living Seleukids in Syria. The young man

[25] Jos., *AJ* 13.267.
[26] Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.257; Justin 39.1.4.
[27] Justin 39.1.4.

was then sent to Syria as the new king, with an army to support him. This, of course, derailed the plans of Kleopatra Thea. It is perhaps at this point that she sent into exile her remaining sons, that by Antiochos VII, also called Antiochos—he became nicknamed 'Kyzikenos' when he settled in the city of Kyzikos, under the care of a eunuch called Krateros—and Demetrios' son Antiochos Grypos, who was sent to Athens.[28] Both of these were in danger from Demetrios, Grypos as a failed pretender, and Kyzikenos as a competitor. The eldest son, Seleukos, however, seems to have been retained with Kleopatra. (This was the procedure adopted by Demetrios I when threatened by Alexander Balas and Ptolemy Philometor; Euergetes was not the only player in these games with precedents in his family history.)

There were, therefore, three parties active in Syria: Demetrios, who held at least Seleukeia-in-Pieria and much of Palestine and the Phoenician coast; Kleopatra Thea and her children were in Ptolemaic-Ake; Alexander had inherited the rebellious region of Antioch and Apameia, whose rising had forced Demetrios to return from Pelusion. Both Demetrios and Alexander had armies, Demetrios commanding the men whom he had taken against Egypt—less the mutineers perhaps—and Alexander the Egyptian force sent to Syria with him plus those who joined him in Syria. Kleopatra Thea was in control of Ptolemais-Ake; she perhaps did not have much in the way of military force, but she was able to defend her position.

Ptolemy had deliberately ignored Kleopatra Thea's plight, since he had no interest in helping her. She could only be seen as a competitor and an awkward element complicating his conflict with Kleopatra II. His main concern was to distract Demetrios and to sow confusion in Syria. In this it was important that the claim of Alexander to be a Seleukid was transparently phoney. No one seems to have believed in it for a moment, and he attracted the nickname Zabeinas, apparently meaning 'bought', implying that he had been paid to pretend, and perhaps conveying an implication of slavery.[29] Even if his 'adoption' by Antiochos VII or Alexander Balas had been a fact, it was wholly irrelevant to the Seleukid kingship when there were two sons of Demetrios II and one of Antiochos' alive and available—including the already briefly proclaimed Antiochos VIII.

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[28] Eusebios, *Chronographia* 1.257; App., *Syr.* 68.
[29] Jos., *AJ* 13.268.

Euergetes had gauged the Syrian situation to a nicety. He was, unusually for a Ptolemaic king, uninterested in recovering control of Koile Syria—though this may be because he was always wholly preoccupied with maintaining himself in Egypt against his sister. He could recall that his brother had died in trying to seize the Syrian kingship, but it is also a fact that at no point in his career, which lasted from 170 to 116, did he ever indicate a wish to recover Koile Syria, or to displace the Seleukids. And now, having been threatened by a Seleukid attack whose object was to place Demetrios on the Ptolemaic throne, or at least restoring Kleopatra II to sole rule in Egypt, a project which must include compassing Euergetes' own death, his only interest was in preventing that expedition's recurrence; a complicated and preferably lengthy civil war in Syria would be a way of doing this.

Demetrios was unpopular in Syria for a variety of reasons. His expedition against Egypt, an intelligent move though it seems, came immediately after the destruction of Antiochos VII's army. This was an event which had touched many of the households in the great cities of Syria, for it seems that survivors who reached home were relatively few.[30] The wound was later reopened by the return of Antiochos' body for burial with his ancestors, sent by either Phraates or, more probably, by Artabanos. Alexander Zabeinas was in control of Antioch at the time and made a very good impression by his apparent filial devotion. This was a nice gesture by the Parthian king, who must have hoped that it would create internal difficulties for both Alexander and Demetrios, just in case either felt the need to march eastwards.

The whole affair in Syria took some time to develop. Demetrios' attack on Egypt had turned back in 128, and the new Alexander was produced not long after. It will have taken some time for Euergetes to locate a suitable candidate and organise the expedition, which must have moved by sea. Both sides in Syria then had to canvass support, recruit soldiers and investigate possibilities. Alexander was strong enough by 127/126 (the date is vague) to march south. He met Demetrios' army near Damascus and won a victory. No doubt he had competent commanders among his followers.[31] Kleopatra II meanwhile had fled from Alexandria, taking her treasure with her, and took refuge with Kleopatra Thea and Demetrios.[32] The exact sequence of events is not very clear, but the combination of

[30] Justin 39.1.1.
[31] Justin 9.1.7; Jos., *AJ* 13.268.
[32] Justin 39.1.4

the three was clearly threatening to Euergetes, since they could finance a new army. Joined with that of Demetrios, this could be used to launch yet another attack on Egypt. The defeat of Demetrios scotched that possibility, and Euergetes managed, with some difficulty, to gain control of Alexandria about the same time.[33] Although he had won his civil war, he was his usual cruel self in victory,[34] so alienating many who might have supported him.

The defeat of Demetrios in battle near Damascus ended Kleopatra II's chances of returning to Egypt by force. She and Euergetes managed to become reconciled over the next couple of years; no doubt the prospect of Kleopatra financing a mercenary army with the treasure she had taken from Alexandria, and the destruction of her own party in Alexandria, helped the process along. But it took time. In Syria, Demetrios had lost his last support. Fleeing from his defeat, he was refused refuge by his wife at Ptolemais-Ake, and was murdered when he tried to enter Tyre.[35] No doubt to the astonishment of everyone involved, Alexander II was therefore sole king, ruling in fact as well as pretence. But he was never in control of the whole kingdom, whose precise extent was now very vague.

Kleopatra Thea was blamed for Demetrios' death,[36] but it seems unlikely that she was guilty of anything more than revulsion. Demetrios sailed north from Ptolemais-Ake to Tyre, but was there arrested and imprisoned by the city governor, who was directly responsible for the king's killing; Kleopatra Thea could have given the order, and certainly by her action in shutting him out of Ptolemais she condemned him to powerlessness. Her eldest son Seleukos, Demetrios' son, became king, but only for a short time. She soon had him killed, briefly took sole power herself, and then jointly with her next son, Antiochos VIII Grypos, whom she had already briefly tried to make king two years before.[37] None of this was designed to calm Syria or recover control from Alexander Zabeinas.

The two Kleopatras plus Antiochos VIII were now allied against Ptolemy Euergetes, once Demetrios was out of the way, so Ptolemy's support for Alexander continued for a time. But the reconciliation of Euergetes and Kleopatra II at some point between 126 and 124—the triple

[33] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 200.
[34] Valerius Maximus IX.2, ext 5.
[35] Jos., *AJ* 13.268; Justin 39.1.7–8.
[36] App., *Syr.* 68; Livy, *Per.* 40—both rather late sources.
[37] App., *Syr.* 69; Eusebius, *Chronographia* I.257; Justin 39.1.9; Bellinger, 'End', 64, though he omits Seleukos V's reign.

monarchy in Egypt was being used in the dating formula by 124[38]—and so Ptolemy could cease to support Alexander. He switched instead to supporting Antiochos Grypos, presumably by ordering his commanders in Syria to change sides. Once again, the past was replaying itself.

Alexander clearly had enough local support in Syria to produce an army of a reasonable size and competence, for he was able to fight another battle against Grypos and his new Ptolemaic allies. This was almost the end, however; he was shut out of Laodikeia-ad-Mare and Seleukeia-in-Pieria, and driven out of Antioch when he attempted to melt down a golden statue of Zeus to finance his continuing fight. Again, this suggests he was still not without support, for he required the money presumably to pay his forces. But this was really the end. He was captured by a group of bandits near the coast, and was delivered to Antiochos VIII at Poseideion on the Syrian coast. He was executed.[39]

The Eighth Syrian War was therefore a mixture of two civil wars, the mixture being in part the result of the intermarriages of the two royal families. There was, to the sure, not a great deal of international, as compared with internal, warfare, but an attempted Syrian invasion of Egypt and two Egyptian expeditions to Syria over a period of five or six years (128–123) clearly add up to a war. It was, on Demetrios' part, a war for the union of the two kingdoms, and on Euergetes', one to prevent that union, though it is difficult to envisage this ever actually coming about given the complex antipathies which it produced and revealed. Yet stranger reconciliations have happened. The fact is that the union of the two kingdoms did not happen, and was probably never going to, though it was clear that the two states were still inextricably bound together. This was partly, perhaps even predominantly, due to the intermarriages of the two dynasties, but it was also because the idea of union was in the air.

Union must have seemed a good idea to many more people than Demetrios II, but it was also an idea whose time had now long passed. It was only an expedient which was needed in the face of the advance of Rome, but by the 120s both kingdoms were so weakened by civil warfare between royal rivals, and in the Seleukid case by defeat in the east, that even together the union of the Egypt of Euergetes and the Syria of Demetrios II was scarcely enough to form a power sufficient to be a threat to the contemporary Roman Republic.

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[38] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 201.

[39] Justin 39.2.1–6; Jos., *AJ* 13.269; App., *Syr*. 69.

It was also something which would run up against a wide variety of an entrenched interests in and around the two kingdoms. The two royal families would be dubious about the matter at best, for at least one of them would have to be excluded from power, unless only representatives of one of the royal houses survived—quite possible, of course, with such murderous rulers as Euergetes and Kleopatra Thea. The Egyptian and Syrian native populations would hardly approve of the idea, since the union would clearly solidify the Greek ruling element in both lands. The disputes in Egypt had resulted in the recruitment of significant numbers of Egyptians into the Ptolemaic army and administration, principally by Euergetes, and they would not wish to jeopardize their new positions; the highest ranking Egyptian, the Thebaid's governor Paos, had even opposed the rule of his compatriot Harsiese, thereby making cooperation with the ruling regime his choice rather than opposition to it.

In Syria the opposite happened: the Jews of Judaea had at last broken away from the Seleukid kingdom, as had Arados; other Phoenician cities were effectively independent by 120—the killing of King Demetrios in Tyre was also a gesture of independence by that city—as were several other sections of Syria, under native rule, such as Edessa and Kommagene. It was neither the cooperation nor the wholesale rejection of royal Macedonians which was the preferred 'native' policy in Syria, but local independence. For these new states, a union of the great kingdoms would be disastrous, since their existence depended on the two dynasties remaining divided and weak. These interests, together with the inevitable enmity of Rome and the Parthians to the idea, were powerful negative factors, certainly powerful enough to block any union. As an idea it must have looked good to Demetrios II, but almost everyone else opposed it.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# THE NINTH, AND LAST, WAR

The wars for Syria which were waged between the Ptolemaic and Seleukid dynasties from 301 BC had resulted essentially in the grievous weakening of both powers. The Seleukid state was now shorn of its territories to east and west, so that when the Romans arrived in its neighbourhood they came to refer to it as a 'Syrian' kingdom. The Ptolemaic state fared somewhat better, still retaining its Egyptian territory, though its two overseas lands in Cyprus and Cyrenaica were usually separated under different kings after the death of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes in 116.

In Syria itself, the land the two dynasties had been long fighting over had begun to fragment from the 130s. Complementing the still solid Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt was a still solid Seleukid kingdom in North Syria and Kilikia, but neither power was able to exercise control over Koile Syria completely or for long. Into the power gap they had created between them came several of the indigenous peoples of the disputed lands. The crucial event seems to have been the death of Antiochos VII in 129 and the destruction of his army. This decisive weakening of the Seleukid state permitted ambitious but small communities to strike out successfully for independence. The Jewish state of the Maccabees had struggled and ambushed and politicked its way to virtual independence by the 120s, and the long and successful reign—it had become a monarchy—of John Hyrkanos (134–104 BC) finally established it as a permanent feature on the political scene. Along the Mediterranean coast the Phoenician cities had also worked their way into independence: Arados, after repeated attempts, in 129/128, when it seized its small empire along the nearby coast; Tyre and Sidon during the 120s—the murder of Demetrios II at Tyre rather indicates a willingness in that city to take desperate decisions, a good mark of independence. On the Arabian borders the Nabataean kingdom resisted Maccabean attacks after 129, which impelled it to militarise and develop more competent governmental institutions, so that it was clearly another fixture of some local power. The Seleukid kings held some of the ports, including much of the Palestinian coast, Damascus, all the aboriginal Seleukid lands in North Syria as far

as the Euphrates crossing at Zeugma, and Kilikia. But the kingdom was no longer more than one of several local powers, though more powerful than most.

Both of the great dynasties, however, suffered still from divided and uncertain and disputed successions, aggravated by the power of the royal women. From 113 two Seleukids disputed their throne; from 116 two Ptolemies disputed their's, after the deaths in that year of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes and Kleopatra II, and three Kleopatras were also involved in both dynasties. The final war between these dynasties over control of Koile Syria grew out of these internal family conflicts, but only after they had indulged in ten years of raids, marriages, and murders. In this case, however, the fighting was largely between rival Ptolemies; the internal Seleukid conflict produced a strained paralysis in which neither party could intervene in Koile Syria—Josephus compared to the situation to a wrestling match in which the two combatants did not dare relax for fear of ceding an advantage to the opponent.[1]

The dominating personality in the approach to this last war and in its conduct was Kleopatra III, the daughter of Philometor and Kleopatra II who had been Euergetes' niece, stepdaughter and second wife. She survived both kings and her mother, and she used her daughters to extend and bolster her own power and influence. Like her half-sister Kleopatra Thea she bypassed the direct hereditary succession and favoured her younger son, Ptolemy X Alexander, over the elder son, Ptolemy IX Soter, as successor to Ptolemy Euergetes on the Egyptian throne. As in the previous generation, Cyprus became a separate kingdom for the rejected claimant, Ptolemy IX Soter, who refused to accept his exclusion from the main kingdom and constantly aimed to 'recover' it. In his will Euergetes had allotted Cyrenaica to another son, Ptolemy Apion, the fruit of his long-standing liaison with a concubine, but Apion does not seem to have secured his inheritance for over a decade, until 102.[2] The intermarriages of Ptolemies and Seleukids had continued in the 120s with the marriage of Tryphaina, the daughter of Euergetes and Kleopatra III, to Antiochos VIII Grypos, as a sign of their alliance against Alexander Zabeinas. Kleopatra III had two more daughters, Kleopatra IV, who was married to her brother Ptolemy IX as a child, and Selene. One of the first acts of Kleopatra III after Euergetes' death was to compel Ptolemy IX to set aside Kleopatra IV and marry Selene. Meanwhile Ptolemy X, surnamed

[1] Jos., *AJ* 13.327.
[2] Justin 39.5.2; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 210.

Alexander, went off to Cyprus, where he proclaimed himself king. When Kleopatra IV was rejected she also went to Cyprus, but there she helped herself to an army, which she took to Syria as her dowry for her marriage to one of the two Antiochoi there.[3]

Antiochos VIII Grypos, married to Tryphaina, had been king in Syria apparently more or less peacefully since 126, and had survived a murder attempt by his mother in 121, as a result of which he had her killed. His only adult rival was his half-brother Antiochos Kyzikenos, and it was he who was the target of Kleopatra IV's marriage plans. Presented with a wife and an army simultaneously, Kyzikenos rebelled against his half-brother. In his first rush, he was very successful, overrunning most of the remaining lands of the kingdom, but then Grypos recovered much of his losses.[4] Neither of them could win decisively, and the conflict between them became the stalemate likened by Josephos to a wrestling match, with minimal advances and retreats by both kings, most of which can only be discerned by the changes in the productions of the city mints.

Early casualties were the two wives. Kleopatra IV was captured by Grypos when he retook Antioch in 112, and was murdered at the instigation of Tryphaina, her sister;[5] during the next year Tryphaina herself was captured by Kyzikenos, who returned the favour.[6] (There were now just two of these women left: Kleopatra III and Selene.)

This most direct intervention in Seleukid internal affairs had begun with Euergetes' sponsorship of Alexander Zabeinas, then by his switch to supporting Grypos. So Kleopatra IV's intervention was superficially similar. But she was acting independently, and probably in defiance of official Ptolemaic policy, in so far as it was ever articulated. Her transfer of an army to Syria and stimulation of a new civil war was reminiscent of the sponsorship of Alexander Balas by Ptolemy Philometor, and must be seen as the latest version of the old inter-war intrigues mounted by all the Ptolemies and Seleukids since the dispute over Koile Syria began. These events are administered by being at one remove from direct confrontation, perhaps by acquiring the allegiance of a neutral city, or persuading a high official to defect, or, as in this case, an expedition by a disaffected member of the royal family—one may go back

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[3] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 206; Whitehorne, *Cleopatras*, 165.

[4] Trogus, *Prol.*, 39; on all the matters in this chapter the basic modern account is Bellinger, 'End'.

[5] Justin 39.3.4–11.

[6] Justin 39.3.1–2.

as far as Ptolemy Keraunos' killing of the first Seleukos for a parallel. It would take more than this, particularly since the two leading Ptolemaic women in Syria were soon dead, to provoke a full-scale war. The issue was still the possession of Koile Syria, the land between Gaza and the Eleutheros River, though a good deal less than the whole land was now acquirable.

As an example of the reduction of the prize, there is the new expansion of the Judaean kingdom. In 108 John Hyrkanos, having watched the contest between Grypos and Kyzikenos for several years without intervening, took a hand. By that time Grypos had regained most of the kingdom, and Kyzikenos was confined to parts of Koile Syria, while Damascus was disputed between them.[7] Both were effectively excluded from many of the cities, where the citizens were clearly irritated with the situation, and from which any garrisons were withdrawn to increase the size of the field armies. Between 108 and 104, many of the mints which produced coinages for one or other of the kings ceased production; this closes off one of our few sources of information, but is also a sign that the cities were largely out of the control of any of the rivals. It was another stage in the move into independence of many of them. Hyrkanos had slowly expanded his kingdom southwards along the Judaean plateau and across the Jordan, and now for the first time he moved against a Greek city. Samaria, to the north of his lands, was a well-fortified place with a mixed Greek, Jewish, and Samaritan population, and was well defended. Hyrkanos' army did not have the siege engines of a fully equipped contemporary Hellenistic army, but he was able to blockade the city and surround it with a wall and ditch.[8]

Kyzikenos, dominant in the Palestinian area, was called in by the citizens and attempted to break the siege, but failed, being defeated in battle by Hyrkanos' son Aristoboulos. (This is a good indication of the military weakness of Kyzikenos, and hence of Grypos also.) Kyzikenos retreated to Skythopolis nearby, which appears to have been his base.[9] The Jewish blockade of Samaria was renewed, and a second appeal went to Kyzikenos. This time, clearly understanding that he was too weak to break the siege, he contacted Ptolemy IX Soter in Egypt, who sent him 6,000 soldiers.

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[7] Bellinger, 'End', 69.
[8] Jos., *AJ* 13.275–276.
[9] Jos., *AJ* 13.277.

Here the local Palestinian conflict became linked with the conflict within the Ptolemaic family, and with the Seleukid civil war. Ptolemy Soter's decision to send troops was done against the wishes of his mother, Kleopatra III. She reacted by summoning his brother Ptolemy X Alexander from Cyprus to take over the Egyptian kingship—under her domination, of course. He sailed and landed, not in Alexandria, but at Pelusion, which means that Soter was still in control of the great city. Kleopatra collected Ptolemy Alexander and, now having a king to hand, aroused the Alexandrian mob to attack Soter. He fled—to Cyprus, and Alexander was installed in his place as king. Soter had left so precipitately that he left his wife and children behind. Kleopatra III reinforced her own position by placing her name before that of Alexander in the hieroglyphic records, and a new dating system—'the eleventh year of Kleopatra and the eighth of Ptolemy Alexander'—was brought in, so expunging the reign of Ptolemy Soter.[10] She also took over the office of priest of Alexander (the Great) herself, the most important royal priesthood in Hellenistic Egypt; until he was driven out Ptolemy Soter had held that position every year since his accession.[11]

The last document dated by Soter is of 23 October 107, and the first of Ptolemy Alexander is of 15 November.[12] Alexander was thus installed and Soter expelled about the beginning of November 107. Meanwhile, 6,000 of Soter's troops were in Palestine under Kyzikenos' command, and were fighting Kyzikenos' war. He attempted again to make Hyrkanos raise the siege of Samaria, this time by conducting a ravaging raid into Judaea, but this also failed, and he lost 'many' soldiers—so Josephus says[13]—in ambushes. Kyzikenos then turned away to pursue the war against his half-brother, leaving two generals, Kallimandros and Epikrates, to continue the war in Judaea.[14]

Hyrkanos had at some point appealed to Rome, and the Senate produced a *senatus consultum* requiring Kyzikenos—'Antiochos son of Antiochos'—to cease fighting Hyrkanos.[15] This may have been the cause of Kyzikenos' withdrawal, but it is more likely that he preferred to face Grypos. The result was that Kyzikenos personally ceased to command against the Jewish forces, though he did so without withdrawing his army, which

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[10] Jos., *AJ* 13.278; Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 207.
[11] Justin 39.4.1; Pausanias 1.9.2; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 2.8.
[12] H. Maehler, 'Egypt under the last Ptolemies', *BICS* 30, 1963.
[13] Jos., AJ 13.279.
[14] Jos., *AJ* 13.279.
[15] Referred to in a later document quoted by Jos., *AJ* 14.247–255.

he left under the two Ptolemaic generals to continue the war. There is thus no indication that he did this because Rome said so. It was all the usual late Hellenistic diplomatic shadow boxing: an appeal to Rome that Hyrkanos knew would produce only a paper decree; an apparent compliance which was no compliance; a Roman action which was of no actual effect and was not enforceable, and which the Senate knew would have no result.

The links between the two dynastic disputes continued, bringing ever nearer the prospect of an international war. Kleopatra III sent a force to dislodge Ptolemy Soter from Cyprus, but much of it deserted to Soter on arrival. He was in sufficient peril, so it seems, that he had to withdraw from the island, taking refuge with his forces in Seleukeia-in-Pieria. This was roughly at the same time that his ally Kyzikenos came north, from the fighting at Samaria against John Hyrkanos, to Tripolis in northern Phoenicia. The coincidence of these moves suggests a plan between Soter and Kyzikenos to attack Grypos. It may be that Ptolemy Soter was not actually escaping from Kleopatra's attacks on him in Cyprus but was assisting Kyzikenos against his brother. If so, it did not work. Soter soon had to leave Seleukeia and move back to Cyprus, which he re-occupied with little difficulty, and where he ruled as an independent king for the rest of the life.[16] Meanwhile, the two generals left by Kyzikenos to conduct the war against Hyrkanos were as unsuccessful in assisting Samaria as the king had been. One of the generals, Kallimandros, died in the fighting. The other, Epikrates, took refuge in Skythopolis, then sold that city to Hyrkanos. Samaria fell, and was physically destroyed.[17]

The control of Koile Syria was once more at stake in this confusion. The expansion of the Judaean state northwards now clearly threatened the Seleukid territories: Samaria and Skythopolis were both Greco-Macedonian cities, and in Hyrkanos' hands they gave him control over the strategic highway connecting the coastal region with the Jordan Valley. Grypos retained more or less firm control over the old Seleukid power centre in the north of Syria, and he and Kyzikenos were now contending for what remained of the old Ptolemaic province. The cities and local states there were now developing their independent policies under the shadow of the kings' contest. Of these the most aggressive was Judaea, but the cities tended only to establish their independence without resorting

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16 Jos., *AJ* 13.279; Diod. 34/35.39a; Justin 39.4.1–2.
17 Jos., *AJ* 13.280–281.

to aggression.[18] The mutual enmity of the two Seleukids was mirrored in the Ptolemaic dispute. The two kings who were in the weakest positions, Kyzikenos and Soter, were now allied, as a result of which the alliance between Grypos and Kleopatra III, originally formed to fight Alexander Zabeinas, was refreshed and strengthened. The purposes of the two Seleukids were clearly first of all to survive, and then to recover full control of their respective kingdoms. This alliance compelled the rival allies to cooperate actively.

Sources for the short period (107–104) between these last events are non-existent; even the numismatic sources fail. The mutual antipathy of the two Seleukids and the three Ptolemies, was not lessened, though a degree of cooperation existed in that the mint of Alexandria continued to produce coins for Cyprus.[19] It may be that the two brothers, Soter and Alexander, were less antagonistic to each other than their mother to them in succession. Soter also ruled in Cyrenaica, which was supposed to have gone to Apion, who apparently lived on in Alexandria in peace.

The crisis which resulted in the last Syrian War began, as had the previous one, in Judaea. In 104–103 the Judaean state went through its own very unpleasant and destabilizing succession crisis.[20] As a result, from 103 the king (a title taken when Hyrkanos died) was Alexander Iannai, the second son of Hyrkanos. The crisis had involved the death of Hyrkanos' wife, reputedly by starvation after being imprisoned by her eldest son Aristoboulos, who had inherited from Hyrkanos, the murder at Aristoboulos' orders of his brother Antigonos—these had been colleagues in the siege of Samaria—and the death of Aristoboulos himself from disease. The succession finally went to a third brother, Alexander Iannai, who had also been imprisoned by Aristoboulos for a time. Yet another brother, whose name is not known, put forward his own claim to the kingship and was killed.

This is all very similar behaviour to that of the Ptolemies and Seleukids at the time of royal successions. Also similar is the prominence of women in the crisis. John Hyrkanos' will had divided secular from religious authority, with Aristoboulos becoming high priest and his widow having the secular power.[21] Aristoboulos jailed her and took the title of king while retaining the priestly role. When he died his widow, Salome

[18] Bellinger, 'End', 70–71; Jos., *AJ* 13.327.
[19] I. Michaelidou-Nicolaou, *Prosopography of Ptolemaic Cyprus*, Goteborg 1976, 106.
[20] Jos., *AJ* 13.299–323.
[21] Jos., *AJ* 13.302.

Alexandra, released the brothers still in jail and, by marrying Alexander Iannai, made him king.[22] This is just the sort of authority wielded by Ptolemaic queens like Kleopatra II and III. Judaea, with a king, murderous succession crises, powerful royal women, and rulers using Greek names, was turning into a normal Hellenistic kingdom—except for the religious powers arguing and disputing beneath the surface.

Perhaps to distract everyone from the bloodletting and confusion, Alexander Iannai took his army to war. Ambitiously he laid siege to Ptolemais-Ake, the centre of Seleukid power in the south, and the city any Ptolemy would want to control.[23] The city appears in Josephus' account of these events to have operated autonomously, but its mint had produced coins in Kyzikenos' name until 106,[24] and there seems no reason to assume that he had lost control over it. It is therefore significant that when Alexander Iannai laid siege to the city, its citizens sent an appeal to Ptolemy Soter in Cyprus.[25] Soter had been Kyzikenos' ally for the past five years, and it is a reasonable assumption that the appeal to Soter was instigated either by Kyzikenos or by his governor in Ptolemais-Ake, probably because Kyzikenos did not have the power to intervene—just as he had failed to do so successfully at Samaria.

Some assistance for the city came from Zoilos, the tyrant of Dor and Strato's Tower, coastal towns south of Ptolemais-Ake, which he or their inhabitants had detached from the rule of the kings. Zoilos, unusually among these cities, is said by Josephus to have had ambitions to extend his power, but he is equally likely to have feared the continued expansion of the Judaean state. His assistance was perhaps not altogether welcome to the citizens of Ptolemais-Ake, and anyway he only contributed 'a company of soldiers', which were obviously not going to see off Alexander's greater forces.[26] The growth and threat of Judaean power had stimulated an extension of the alliance between Ptolemy Soter and Antiochos Kyzikenos to include Zoilos, who was actually an enemy of both of them, since both looked to controlling his cities as part of Koile Syria, and he looked to extending his power at the expense of the kings.

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[22] Jos., *AJ* 15.320–323.

[23] Jos., *AJ* 13.324; for this conflict see E. van 't Dack *et al*, *The Judaean–Syrian-Egyptian Conflict of 103–101 BC. A Multilingual Dossier concerning a 'War of Scepters'*, Brussels 1989.

[24] Bellinger, 'End', 87.

[25] Jos., *AJ* 13.326.

[26] Jos., *AJ* 13.324–326.

Soter was also promised the alliance of the city of Gaza if he came to Syria; it would therefore seem that Gaza was effectively independent. (The city had had to face an attack by Jonathan Maccabaeus years before without help.) Missing from the roster of possible allies was Ashkelon, which, according to its coins, was held by Grypos until at least 104/103, when it began a new era: that is, the city detached itself from Grypos and into independence at the very time all this was happening;[27] presumably the motive was to avoid being attacked by the Soter-Kyzikenos forces. Gaza was a different matter. It had been intimidated by Jonathan years before, but it had now recovered, prospering by contacting the Nabataean kingdom, so becoming that kingdom's major outlet to the Mediterranean seaways.[28] Since Judaea and Nabataea were enemies, this clearly put Gaza in the camp of Iannai's foes, and an alliance with the Soter-Kyzimenos-Zoilos group is likely—and in fact Soter was able to winter in the city later.[29] For Ptolemy Soter it had the advantage of being the gateway to Egypt. It was the kingship of that land he really wished to recover.

These various developments took some time, but the siege of Ptolemais-Ake was conducted by the same Maccabean army which had taken a year to take Samaria, and could only do so by a blockade and starvation; it is evident that Iannai disposed of none of the mechanical siege engines used by the more professional Hellenistic armies. So the threat to the city was hardly immediate, and the citizens were persuaded by a local politician, Demainetos, that to let a Ptolemaic king into their city with an army would be as stultifying to their lives as letting in Iannai's army. The Seleukid fraternal war had meant that cities such as Ptolemais-Ake and Gaza—and perhaps Samaria and Skythopolis as well—had been compelled to become politically autonomous. The treatment of Samaria at John Hyrkanos' hands will have warned any Greek city in Palestine that it would be wise to resist a Maccabean attack automatically and to the utmost; the betrayal of Skythopolis by Soter's general was an equally disturbing example of what might happen if reliance was placed on an ally—this was particularly apposite for Ptolemais-Ake. The citizens of both Gaza and Ptolemais were clearly making their own minds up. The

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27 A.R. Brett, 'A New Cleopatra Tetradrachm of Ascalon', *AJA* 41, 1937, 452–463, and 'The Mint of Ascalon under the Seleucids', *ANSMN* 4, 1950, 43–45; Schurer vol. 2, 106–107.

28 Aretas of the Nabataeans came to Gaza's assistance: Jos., AJ 13.360; the city as a centre of trade routes is well described by G.A. Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, 25th ed., London 1931, 136.

29 Jos., *AJ* 13.352.

ambitions of all the surrounding kings will have been all too clear to the few free cities left in the region. Demainetos argued that it would be better to fight for themselves.[30] However, Ptolemy Soter was not deterred by the withdrawal of the invitation. He brought his army to 'assist' Ptolemais-Ake nevertheless.[31]

Soter's own aims, of course, were not confined to Ptolemais, nor even to Palestine and his alliance with Kyzikenos. In the events which followed, neither Grypos nor Kyzikenos figures. Soter's long-term aim was to return to Egypt, preferably in triumph, and perhaps preferably over the dead body of his mother. This was quite evident to Demainetos, who pointed out that Kleopatra would never permit Ptolemy to build up his strength in Koile Syria.

All this manoeuvring and marching had been watched with close attention by Kleopatra III in Alexandria, as Demainetos surmised. The arrival of Soter with his army in the vicinity of Ptolemais-Ake compelled her to act. One measure she took was to renew her contacts with Antiochos Grypos, to whom she sent her daughter Kleopatra Selene as his new wife.[32] Since Selene had originally been married to Soter, this served both to sow further enmity between the two kings and to insult Soter. It also cemented an alliance which was already the inclination of both rulers, since Grypos and Kleopatra III (and Ptolemy Alexander) were threatened if the Soter-Kyzikenos alliance prospered. This also aligned the Egyptian government with Ptolemais-Ake and Gaza and Zoilos, all of which were blocks on the way to Egypt out of Palestine. It is perhaps at this point that Ashkelon withdrew its allegiance from Grypos, being surrounded by his enemies, and being wholly out of his reach.

At Ptolemais Soter was therefore rebuffed by the citizens, strengthened in their resolve by their alliances. His arrival, however, was a clear threat to Alexander Iannai, who raised the siege and return to Judaea.[33] Soter landed at Sykamena (Shiqmona) at the foot of Mount Carmel, only a short way south of Ptolemais.[34] His army is said to have been 30,000 strong, undoubtedly an exaggeration, but it was strong enough to be immediately the greatest military power south of Antioch. He quickly eliminated Zoilos, and so therefore presumably took over his towns of

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[30] Jos., *AJ* 13.330.
[31] Jos., *AJ* 13.332.
[32] Justin 37.4.4.
[33] Jos., *AJ* 13.324.
[34] Jos., *AJ* 13.332.

Dor and Strato's Tower, and began negotiations with Alexander Iannai.[35] Iannai in turn had contacted Kleopatra III—he had made the same assumption as to her reaction as his enemy Demainetos—presumably on the calculation that they were both enemies of Soter. This diplomatic double-dealing, which was perfectly reasonable in the circumstances, annoyed Soter when he discovered it, or so he said. He still wished to gain control of Ptolemais, so he laid siege to it, thereby confirming that the citizens' second thoughts about requesting his help had been quite correct. Soter then took the bulk of his army off to attack Iannai, and so also confirmed Iannai's estimate of his intentions.[36]

Soter's campaign against Iannai—a warrior by choice, but not a very good one—was successful. He captured the town of Asochis, in southern Galilee, which gave his army booty, and the sale of the captives helped his treasury. An attack was launched on Sepphoris nearby, but it failed, though he caught up with Iannai's army across the Jordan at Asophon and defeated it in battle, causing large numbers of casualties.[37] Josephus' description makes it clear that the Judaean army was a very amateurish organization; the numerically smaller Greek army was better led by the 'tactician' Philostephanos, more agile, and the abilities of the individual fighters were clearly superior. The casualties are said to be 30,000 dead, or 50,000, neither figure being believable, but probably no one really counted. Certainly Iannai's army was dispersed as a result. Soter ravaged the nearby parts of Judaea, and in the meantime his forces also captured Ptolemais.[38] With that city, with Dor and Strato's Tower in his control, and his alliance with Gaza, he now controlled a considerable length of the Palestinian coast; meanwhile, the damage inflicted on the Judaean army temporarily at least knocked Iannai out of the fight. Soter therefore was able to dominate the inland areas along the Plain of Jezreel as far as the Jordan, as well as controlling much of the coast. He was well on his way to carving out a substantial kingdom for himself to add to Cyrenaica and Cyprus, which he already ruled.

Soter had by this time reconstituted a good part of the old Ptolemaic province of Koile Syria. He held several cities along the coast from Ptolemais-Ake to Gaza, though Iannai still held Joppa, so dividing Soter's lands. He had penetrated to the Jordan along the Vale of Jezreel, and had

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35 Jos., *AJ* 13.334–335.
36 Jos., *AJ* 13.335–336.
37 Jos., AJ 337–343.
38 Jos., *AJ* 13.344–347.

perhaps recovered control of Skythopolis, which does not seem to have been in Iannai's hands a little later.[39] He had defeated Iannai's attempt to extend his coastal territories and had ravaged a substantial part of Iannai's kingdom as a warning of what more destruction he could cause. In short Soter had repelled an attack by the hillmen, and had established a kingdom along the coast and in the lowlands.

It was this which brought Kleopatra III into the action in Palestine, though it seems that the army in Egypt had already been mobilised, in anticipation of trouble, not surprisingly.[40] First she removed her grandchildren and a large part of her treasure to sanctuary in the Asklepeion at Kos,[41] thereby emulating the action of Kleopatra II thirty years before, even improving on it, obviously understanding what her and their fates would be if Soter won. She mustered an army to garrison Pelusion, the traditional initial defence post of Egypt against an attack out of Palestine; a second army was sent by sea under the command of her son Ptolemy Alexander to Phoenicia—Sidon was involved in the Kleopatra-Grypos alliance also by this time. It is with these measures that a new stage in the conflict began to unfold.[42] Soter's intention was, there seems little doubt, to use the position he had gained in Palestine as the springboard for an attempt to recover the kingship of Egypt. Kleopatra's and Ptolemy Alexander's purpose, already having control of Egypt, was now to use that as a means of recovering control of Koile Syria, or, if that proved impossible, at least to repel Soter's attack. The weakness of the two Seleukid kings, and the hapless military behaviour of Alexander Iannai, clearly encouraged the thought that Soter was dangerous. It is clear that, had they been able to agree, the various Ptolemies might well have revived their old empire.

When Ptolemy Alexander landed in Palestine, somewhere north of Ptolemais-Ake, for Josephus says he sailed 'towards Phoenicia',[43] he ignored both that city and Soter, and marched to Damascus.[44] This city had been recently under Grypos' control, according to coins produced

[39] Jos., *AJ* 13.355; Alexander Iannai made an agreement with Kleopatra III at Skythopolis, and since he was the petitioner, we may assume he visited her.
[40] Van 't Dack, *Judaean-Syrian-Egyptian conflict*, 'Papyrus 1', a letter dated 29 June 103, implying military preparations as early as that.
[41] Jos., *AJ* 13.349.
[42] Jos., *AJ* 13.349–351.
[43] Jos., *AJ* 13.350
[44] Van 't Dack, *Judaean-Syrian-Egyptian conflict*, 'Papyrus 3'.

there in the previous year,[45] and no doubt it was part of the alliance agreement between Kleopatra III and Grypos that Ptolemy Alexander should protect it against an attack by Kyzikenos. From the point of view of Kleopatra and Ptolemy Alexander, of course, it was part of Koile Syria.

Meanwhile Kleopatra III now brought the main Ptolemaic Egyptian army by land through Sinai and past Gaza (still held, it seems, by Ptolemy Soter, or at least in alliance with him) and came to Ptolemais-Ake. There the garrison installed by Soter defied her, but not for long.[46] In this campaign she imitated Soter's actions of the previous year, and while part of the army attended to the siege of Ptolemais-Ake, most of the troops campaigned in pursuit of Soter himself. One of Kleopatra's generals, Chelkias, was killed in this pursuit. Soter, presumably somewhat desperate by now, made an attempt, based on his control of Gaza, to march on Egypt. Ptolemy Alexander responded by sailing with part of his army by sea to reinforce the garrison at Pelusion. As a result Soter was prevented from entering Egypt,[47] and, while he was involved in that campaign, his garrison in Ptolemais-Ake surrendered to Kleopatra. He was now reduced to Gaza only. It was Ptolemy Alexander who now held the coastal cities and some of inland Palestine; possibly he had a garrison in Damascus as well.

Kleopatra III was by now well on course to reconstitute a large part of the Ptolemaic province of Koile Syria in union with Egypt. The remaining obstacles seemed to be of relatively minor importance after the capture of Ptolemais-Ake. Soter was isolated in Gaza, defeated in both Palestine and Egypt, and in fact he soon abandoned the city and returned to Cyprus.[48] He had done much of the preliminary work in the reconquest, but it is doubtful if Kleopatra thanked him. Alexander Iannai was a competitor, but he had already been beaten by Soter, who had in turn been beaten by Kleopatra's forces, so Iannai should be controllable. Indeed Iannai soon approached Kleopatra offering gifts, in effect also offering the submission of Judaea.[49]

This is not the interpretation which is favoured by many historians, who tend to see Iannai, through Josephus' magnifying spectacles, as a great conqueror and state builder. So in a way he was, eventually, but

45 Bellinger, 'End', 87.
46 Van 't Dack, *Judaean-Syrian-Egyptian conflict*, 'Inscription 3'.
47 Jos., *AJ* 13.350–352.
48 Jos., *AJ* 13.358.
49 Jos., *AJ* 13.353–355.

he was thoroughly trounced by Ptolemy Soter at Asochis, and his army was destroyed temporarily. When he came to meet Kleopatra, he was obviously a supplicant. Josephus credits Kleopatra's general Ananaias with deflecting her from invading Judaea, but he did not say it was impossible to conquer it, only that Iannai was an ally. This may have been an influential argument with the queen, but one feels that rather more was said on the issue than Josephos depicts.[50]

The choice before her was apparently clear: keep her conquests, accept Iannai's tribute, and be content with the partial recovery of southern Koile Syria as far as Ptolemais-Ake and Skythopolis; alternatively she could attempt further conquests, beginning with Judaea, and this certainly seemed possible. Judaea looked fairly easy to take, after its defeat and the casualties its army had already suffered. Damascus had been taken already, even if it had been handed back to Antiochos Grypos and so was no longer under full Ptolemaic control. To reconstitute all Koile Syria as a Ptolemaic province would require the conquest of Phoenicia as well, but to go on fighting in this region would also require fighting the Seleukids as well as the individual cities. She was allied, more or less, with Grypos, who was the stronger of the two feuding Seleukid brothers; he would soon turn into an enemy if she went along the path of conquest towards the north.

The more the prospect was considered, however, the more the obstacles must have seemed daunting. The enmity of Judaea, as apparently threatened by Ananaias, would hardly bother Kleopatra very much, though it does seem unlikely that Ananaias, himself a Jew, would make such a threat to his queen's face. But the sheer difficulty of a conquest in Koile Syria, needing an attack on every city and an open war with Antiochos Grypos, together with her need to supervise Ptolemy Alexander, who was now in Egypt and quite possibly being so pleased with himself that he might feel he could rule without her, and the possibility that Ptolemy Soter might be contemplating a new descent on Egypt from Cyprus while Kleopatra's main force was busy in Syria, were all much more urgent matters to take account of.

Kleopatra met Alexander Iannai at Skythopolis and made a new alliance with him.[51] Since he was already her ally, this new agreement presupposes a revision of the terms of their alliance, and this could only be an agreement by which Iannai subordinated himself to Ptolemaic authority;

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[50] Jos., *AJ* 13.354–355.
[51] Jos., *AJ* 13.355.

the fact of the meeting taking place in Skythopolis also implies that the city was now either neutral or, more probably, under Kleopatra's control, and no longer part of Iannai's kingdom. And when she withdrew back to Egypt Kleopatra left a garrison in Ptolemais-Ake,[52] which means that she intended to retain her Palestinian conquests, presumably including other coastal cities. An attenuated Ptolemaic province of Koile Syria had been re-created.

This situation explains the curious series of campaigns Alexander Iannai made after Kleopatra had left. After capturing Gadara, a city east of the Jordan, in a campaign taking almost a year,[53] and suffering a defeat in an attack on the town of Amathos, also east of the Jordan, he turned back to the Palestinian coast. He captured two small towns, Raphia and Anthedon, which lay near the coast west of Gaza along the road towards Egypt.[54] Then he attacked Gaza itself,[55] which at that point was either independent or technically under the authority of the absent Ptolemy Soter. Iannai, therefore, in all these campaigns conspicuously avoided the area which had been taken by Kleopatra in 103–101. The new Ptolemaic province was safe for the moment, protected by the net of alliances involving Kleopatra III, Alexander Iannai, and Antiochos Grypos—and yet by the time Iannai came to the coast Kleopatra was dead.

She was murdered by Ptolemy Alexander late in 101.[56] Since Iannai carefully avoided that area even after his alliance with Kleopatra expired with her death, it suggests that it was still too well garrisoned for his taste. Presumably Ptolemy Alexander inherited a part of Koile Syria along with Egypt when she died, but Iannai's cunning campaign to capture Raphia, Anthedon, and finally Gaza mean that, when he succeeded, by about 96, he held the entrance to Egypt, and cut off Alexander's attenuated province of Koile Syria from contact with Egypt by land. He was, of course, no threat to Egypt itself, for his military power was limited, and his ambition seems to have been concentrated on Palestine. It had taken his army ten months to capture the small town of Gadara,[57] and perhaps a year to take Gaza, and even then that city was taken by negotiation.[58] Then Iannai let his army sack the city, yet another case of Maccabean military

52 Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 209.
53 Jos., *AJ* 13.356.
54 Jos., *AJ* 13.357.
55 Jos., *AJ* 13.358–364.
56 Justin 39.4.4–5; van 't Dack, *Judaean-Syrian-Egyptian conflict*, 21–23, 110–114.
57 Jos., *AJ* 13.356.
58 Jos., *AJ* 13.358.

unpleasantness and broken treaty promises. The conquest of Gaza does not appear to have taken place until 96.[59] That is, Iannai's forces were clearly as poorly equipped for siege warfare as ever, and he had avoided tangling with Ptolemy Alexander. It is possible that Ptolemy Alexander withdrew his Palestinian garrisons soon after the death of his mother, but he may have maintained some authority in the cities.

The Ninth Syrian War only just qualifies for inclusion in this series of Ptolemaic-Seleukid conflicts. The almost complete absence of Seleukid participation, which was essential for earlier wars, can only be countered by the fact that, beneath the collisions of Ptolemies with Maccabees, and Ptolemies with each other, the conflict was actually about control of Koile Syria, like the other Syrian wars. From that point of view the war in a sense actually began, not in 103 with the arrival of Ptolemaic Soter's army to 'assist' Ptolemais, but in 108 with the beginning of Hyrkanos' attempt to take Samaria. This in turn involved Ptolemy Soter as well as Kyzikenos, and Hyrkanos' eventual success was the foundation for the later attempt by Iannai to take Ptolemais.

Given that the conflict resolved itself into a war between Ptolemy Soter and Kleopatra III, with Ptolemy Alexander also involved, it is most significant that the Seleukids were apparently powerless to intervene. The one attempt Kyzikenos made to relieve Samaria was defeated by Hyrkanos' army, which was easily beaten by everyone else. So we must assume that Kyzikenos was virtually finished, while, since Grypos was unable to fight him, we must also assume that he was also almost exhausted, unless he simply did not wish to get involved in the war.[60] The Ptolemaic rulers were able to get forces and their authority into Koile Syria only because Seleukid power in the area had evaporated. Ptolemaic Egypt was as always a much more solidly formed polity than the looser Seleukid state. And yet the Ptolemies, divided amongst themselves, were by now unable to hold onto their conquests in Palestine. It is a situation which demonstrates most clearly that the two dynasties had in effect committed suicide.

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[59] Jos., *AJ*. 13.365, where Gaza's fall is coordinated with the death of Antiochos Grypos.

[60] It is worth noting in this context that 102–100 was the period when M. Antonius was campaigning by sea along the Pamphylian and Rough Kilikian coasts, hunting down pirates. Grypos may well have been more concerned to keep up his guard in Syria and Smooth Kilikia in case the Roman campaign ended up in his own territory.

EPILOGUE

# KLEOPATRA'S EMPIRE

The longing of the Ptolemies to be a great power never died; it continued to the very end of the dynasty's rule in Egypt, the reign of Kleopatra VII. After the loss of Koile Syria, however, they were reduced to a secondary status, overshadowed first by their Seleukid rivals, and then by their Roman rescuers. In that condition they fell into the negligent protection of the Roman Republic, which could have claimed to have rescued the kings from extinction at the 'Day of Eleusis' in 168. An intelligent and able king could ignore that uncomfortable situation for a time, as did Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII, and could pursue his own policies without referring to Rome. But after about 100 BC dynastic division and Roman greed steadily reduced the kingdom to ever-greater dependence on Roman favour.

The consolation was perhaps that the age-old competitor, the Seleukid dynasty, was in even worse case, and was eliminated from any real power by the 80s, though pretenders to the restoration reappeared in the 60s and 50s. The last ruler to have power in Koile Syria was, ironically, Kleopatra Selene, who held out in Ptolemais-Ake against the Armenian king Tigranes. This ensured her execution when Tigranes took the city—which he almost immediately evacuated when he came under Roman attack in his home kingdom.[1] Into the Syrian vacuum came Rome, not just as a protector, but as a predator. By 60 BC the Ptolemaic kingdom survived, but continued in the 50s only because of the cunning of Ptolemy XII, who delivered massive bribes in person in Rome to Roman politicians.[2] The wealth of the Ptolemies, generated by the peasantry and collected by the entrenched bureaucracy, thereupon flowed into (private) Roman treasuries. By this time this was the only way the kingdom could maintain even a semblance of independence. The only reason Egypt was not annexed to the Republic, as Asia and Macedon and Carthage and Syria had been, was because no Roman politician could

[1] Jos., *AJ* 12.420–421; Strabo 16.2.3.
[2] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 223–227.

contemplate one of his competitors gaining credit for accomplishing such an act.[3] Indeed when one politician, A. Gabinius, on the direct orders of the consul Pompey, restored Ptolemy XII to power in Alexandria, he was prosecuted when he returned to Rome for exceeding the bounds of his authority as proconsul.[4] The Republic was as dysfunctional in its own way as the Ptolemaic kingdom.

Inevitably Roman disorder spilled over into Egypt, which was unstable enough as it was. Roman troops were in Egypt in their thousands by 55 thanks to Gabinius—yet another financial charge by Rome on Egyptian resources—and were kept busy putting down native Egyptian risings.[5] They found it so congenial that, like the Greeks and Macedonians before them, their loyalty to Rome faded and was replaced by an affinity for Egypt. So when the Roman political system finally collapsed into all-out civil war in 49, Egypt was inevitably directly involved. The defeated Pompey, who had earlier been assisted by some Egyptian troops in his campaign against Mithradates of Pontos, and again by more in the civil war against Caesar, arrived in Egypt seeking refuge. His reception was to be murdered.[6]

The purpose of this act, ordered by the advisers of the child Ptolemy XIII, was to prevent the Roman civil war from actually entering Egypt, which was itself enduring a civil war between the children of Ptolemy XII, who had recently died. He had made Rome the executor of his will, by which he made his two eldest children, Kleopatra VII and Ptolemy XIII, joint monarchs.[7] Rome almost at once dived into its own civil war, so this guarantee had effectively failed; Kleopatra, having seized sole power for a year or so, was overthrown and fled for her life, but then returned to fight for her position. Ptolemy XIII, only twelve years old, was favoured by many of the court officials, who knew that his youth would allow them to exercise power; clearly they were already scared of Kleopatra. Ptolemy, however, also had the support of most of the

[3] Ibid, 227–228.

[4] Dio Cassius 39.55–58; Strabo 17.1.11; Plut., *Antony* 3.4–7.

[5] Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.4.4 ad 3.110.2; E. Van 't Dack, 'L'Armée romaine d'Egypte de 55 à 30 av. J.-C.', *Das römisch-byzantinisch Aegypten, Akten des internationalen Symposions 1978 in Trier*, Mainz 1983, 19–29.

[6] Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.104; Plut., *Pompey*, 77–79.

[7] Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.106.4–6; id., *Bellum Alexandrinum* 33.1–2; Dio Cassius 58.35.4; Porphyry *FGrH* 260F 2.15; L. Crisckuolo, 'La successione a Tolomeo Aulete et i pretisi matrimony de Cleopatra VII con i fratelli', *Egitto e storia dell'Ellenismo all'eta araba, Atti del Colloquio Internazionale, Bologna 1987*, Bologna 1989, 325–339.

Egyptian army, including the ex-Roman contingent, most of whom had assimilated themselves to Egypt and the Egyptian life, and most of the population of Alexandria.[8]

The murder of Pompey did not deflect Caesar, nor did he show himself particularly grateful to the Egyptians for Pompey's murder. Instead Caesar landed in Alexandria, accompanied by his consular lictors and wearing the full panoply of a Roman consul in office, thereby making it clear that he regarded Egypt as subject to Roman authority.[9] In the same spirit he mediated between the sibling monarchs, though actually he favoured Kleopatra, whose spectacular arrival into his presence hidden under a coverlet appealed to his sense of humour.[10] He survived an armed attack by the army of Ptolemy XIII, which included the former Roman troops.[11] Eventually he defeated the attackers, then reinstated the joint monarchy, though with Kleopatra now in the predominant position, in partnership with her younger brother Ptolemy XIV (Ptolemy XIII having died in the fighting).[12] The Alexandrians, however, had overwhelmingly supported Ptolemy, so Caesar left three legions behind when he returned to Rome, to ensure the continuance of the settlement.[13] He also left Kleopatra pregnant.[14]

From these events on, Kleopatra used her cunning, her manifest ability, her charm and culture, and her sexual allure, to enhance her power in Egypt and her control of the politics of the country. She progressively eliminated her competitors, in the murderous tradition of her family. Ptolemy XIII had died in the Roman war, Ptolemy XIV was killed in 44,[15] and the last sibling, Arsinoe IV, was murdered in 41.[16] All this was of course quite normal behaviour for a Hellenistic dynasty. Kleopatra's son by Caesar, given the name Ptolemy Caesar, became her latest joint ruler—Ptolemy XV.

Caesar, far from being besotted with her, was able to withstand any and all requests for substantial favours, even when she moved to Rome

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[8] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 231–232.
[9] Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.112.8.
[10] Plut., *Caesar*, 49.
[11] *Bellum Alexandrinum* 2–3.
[12] *Bellum Alexandrinum* 37.1–2; Suetonius, *Julius* 35.1; App., *Civil War*, 2.90; Dio Cassius 43.44.1–2.
[13] *Bellum Alexandrinum* 33.3–4; Suetonius, *Julius* 76.3.
[14] Plut., *Caesar* 49.10.
[15] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 20.16–17; Jos., *AJ* 15.89.
[16] Jos., *AJ* 15.89.

to appeal in person, bringing their son with her.[17] His successor in the east after his murder, Mark Antony, was more willing to indulge her requests, for he was actively preparing for a major campaign which would require all the resources he could collect. Already Caesar had arranged for Cyprus, annexed by Rome in 58, to be returned to Ptolemaic rule, though the Roman administrators remained in place.[18] When the two joint rulers of the island, Ptolemy XIV and Arsinoe IV, had both been eliminated, the island therefore fell to Kleopatra. In the next decade she recovered other bits and pieces of the old Ptolemaic empire, a process which brought enmity from King Herod, who had established himself as Jewish king in much of Palestine.

Mark Antony was generous with the eastern Roman provinces because he could use Kleopatra as a means of building up his own strength. He allotted part of Rough Kilikia to Ptolemaic rule—it was governed as a unit along with Cyprus[19]—so that the Egyptian navy could be developed by the construction of ships using Kilikian and Cypriot resources of wood and copper and iron. In 37, when he undertook a thorough reorganization of the government of all Asia Minor and Syria, Kleopatra was allocated several discrete areas: an estate in Crete, the kingdom of the Itureans in the Bekaa (whose king had just died), Cyrene, the balsam groves at Jericho (taken from Herod and given to her, surely with the purpose of sowing discord between these two).[20]

Antony had his own reasons for all this, one of which was to prepare for a war on Parthia with the object (to Roman eyes) of gaining revenge for the defeat and death of Crassus and his army in 55, but also (in Greek eyes) an enterprise whose success would re-establish the old Seleukid kingdom. But Kleopatra acted as though this was being done for her, and celebrated by starting a new Egyptian era in 37/36.[21] Coins using this era, some of them with back-to-back portraits of Antony and Kleopatra on the two sides, were minted in several of the Syrian and Phoenician cities, including Arados, Berytos, Damascus, Orthosia, Ptolemais-Ake, Tripolis, and Ashkelon.[22] How much political control is indicated by these mintings is not clear, though it seems unlikely that it was great; the cities had long had autonomy—certainly for many of them for most of the last

[17] Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire* 238–239.
[18] Bagnall, *Ptol. Poss.*, 262.
[19] I. Michaelidou-Nicolaou, *Prosopography of Ptolemaic Cyprus*, Goteborg 1976, 53.
[20] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 2.17; Jos., *AJ* 15.94–96.
[21] Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 2.17.
[22] M.H. Crawford, *Coinage and Money under the Roman Republic*, London 1985, 253.

century—and it was not Antony's policy to antagonize anyone in the area. Kleopatra certainly had influence in the cities, though this was scarcely new; Herod was later able to exercise influence by presenting cities with gifts, such as temples, theatres and colonnaded streets; it was part of being a king at the time.

So whether these cities were allotted to Kleopatra's new 'empire' is not clear, but even if they were so assigned, the actual authority in each area remained firmly Roman—in Cyrene Antony's administrators remained in place, as Romans had in Cyprus, though they now acted as Kleopatra's officials.[23] Then in 34, after the partial success of his eastern campaigns, Antony installed Kleopatra's four children as nominal rulers of the whole east. Ptolemy Caesar was named 'king of kings', while his mother was 'queen of kings'. The three children Kleopatra had by Antony were given subordinate honorary kingships: Alexander Helios was to be king over Armenia, Media and parts east; Kleopatra Selene was to be the queen of Cyrene and Libya; Ptolemy Philadelphos had Phoenicia and Kilikia and Syria. These are the 'donations of Alexandria' proclaimed in the sort of great celebration and procession, with games and spectacles, at which the Ptolemies had always excelled.[24] Of course, it was all essentially a sham, the giving of titles with no substance, for Antony himself held the real power. It may have eventually developed into a method of governing the monarchic eastern lands through subordinate kings, as Egypt had already become, and as Kappadokia and Judaea were. It did, however, provide Antony's new enemy Octavian with a grand basis for hostile propaganda—just as Antony's marriage to Kleopatra at about the same time was an insult to Octavian, whose sister Octavia had been Antony's previous wife. Octavian (illegally) seized Antony's will, which was kept in Rome, and read it out in the Senate. The 'donations' were to be confirmed. Rumours began—surely inspired by Octavian—that Antony would move the capital from Rome to Alexandria.[25]

What Antony was doing, of course, was drawing on Egypt's resources to finance his conquests in the east, and, once his war against Octavian began, in the west as well. The treasure extracted from Egyptian peasants was a major part of the finances he needed, just as the Egyptian navy

[23] G. Perl, 'Die römischen Provinzbeamten in Cyrenae und Creta zur Zeit der Republik', *Klio* 52, 1970, 338–342.

[24] Dio Cassius 49.41; Plutarch, *Antony* 54.

[25] Dio Cassius 50.3.3–5; Plut., *Antony* 56.4–11; Suetonius, *Augustus* 17.1.

which was built up under Kleopatra's rule was a major part of Antony's fleet at the decisive fight of Actium in 31,[26] though it took no part in the fighting. Yet Egypt's resources, even when combined with those gathered in Syria and Asia Minor, were not enough. This had been one of the lessons learned by earlier Ptolemies—by Ptolemy III when a rebellion called him back from his conquests in Syria, by Ptolemy VI, the hard way, when he failed to maintain himself as king in Syria, by Kleopatra III in Palestine, and by all the other Ptolemies who fought the Syrian Wars. The resources of Egypt, when concentrated and centred in Alexandria, seemed inexhaustible, but they were not, especially when a good deal of the *chora* was resentful and much of the south semi-independent under long-lasting governors.[27] Even the full resources of the Roman Empire including Egypt were not enough to reconquer the east beyond Mesopotamia, except for occasional provinces, at any time in the next several centuries.

Kleopatra's rule in Egypt appears to have been firm enough, at least after the elimination of her royal competitors, her brothers and her sister. Part of her policy was to ensure the continuation of the Ptolemaic dynasty in the persons of her children, and she was successful enough in gaining recognition for this from Mark Antony. But her policy had another dimension. She took the title *Thea neotera Philopator kai Philopatris*—to be translated as 'the younger goddess who loves her father and her *patris*'. Interpretation and understanding must go further than mere translation. She refers to her father, Ptolemy XII, who was the last fully accepted king of the family, in order to remind everyone that she had been appointed queen by him in his will. She referred to her *patris*, which appears to be her Macedonian ancestry rather than Egypt,[28] to remind the Greco-Macedonian aristocracy of Alexandria that she was their social leader, and that their wealth and local power depended on maintaining her in her royal power. These two elements, then, refer to her power and position within Egypt and particularly within Alexandria.

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[26] Dio Cassius 50.31–35; Plut., *Antony* 65–68.

[27] 'The *chora* was essentially left to its own devices' (Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*, 239–240); the *strategos* Kallimachos was virtually independent in the Thebaid: J. Bingen, 'Les épistratèges du Thebaide sous les derniers Ptolémées', *Chron. Eg*., 45, 90, 1970, 369–378.

[28] *BGU* XIV 2376; T. Schrapel, *Das Reich der Kleopatra: Quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den 'Landschekingen' Mark Antons*, Trier 1996; J. Bingen, 'Cleopatre VII Philopatris', *Chron Eg* 74, 1999, 118–123 (and in his *Hellenistic Egypt, Monarchy, Society, Economy, Culture*, Edinburgh 2007, 57–62).

The first element of her title, however, is different. She scarcely needed, for Egyptian consumption, to describe herself as a goddess, when she was that automatically simply because she was queen and ruler. There were depictions of her throughout the country, and all documents were dated by her reign. From an Egyptian point of view this was redundant. But the word *neotera* can mean 'the younger', and reading the full phrase *Kleopatra Thea neotera* brings to mind her formidable predecessor Kleopatra Thea, Ptolemaic princess and daughter of Ptolemy VI Philometor, Seleukid queen, wife of three kings, mother of four kings. Kleopatra VII was, in a tentative way, identifying herself not only as a Ptolemaic ruler, but also as a Seleukid.[29]

This, of course, she was not, except by distant descent from Kleopatra Syra (though Kleopatra Thea was her great-aunt, sister of her grandfather Ptolemy IX). But she had received territories which had been ruled by the Seleukids, in Kilikia, in Syria and Phoenicia, and in Palestine. She minted coins in several formerly Seleukid cities. And her children were appointed to 'kingdoms' which geographically included both the Ptolemaic and the former Seleukid kingdoms.

Here was the final appearance of the occasional policy which had been hovering over events in the eastern Mediterranean since the marriage of Kleopatra Syra with Ptolemy V in 195: the political union of the two great Hellenistic kingdoms. It had already surfaced in Kleopatra's lifetime when her half-sister Berenike IV had seized power from their father and had considered a variety of candidates for marriage: three Seleukids were on the list, and one actually managed to reach Alexandria by evading the Roman prohibition. She married him, but was so disgusted with him—he was nicknamed *Kybiosaktes*, 'saltfish-trader'—that she had him killed within a few days.[30] The fact that the Romans were against the marriage indicates that the idea of union was still alive, and that it was still something that they feared. And Kleopatra VII apparently also entertained it.

It was all a dream, empire, union, and all, as brief and insubstantial as the kingdoms produced for her children. Kleopatra's little empire was the casual gift of a Roman warlord, just as her rule in Egypt had been the casual gift of Caesar. It lasted only as long as she and Antony lived, and

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[29] J. Bingen, 'The dynastic politics of Cleopatra VII', *Hellenistic Egypt, Monarchy, Society, Economy, Culture*, Edinburgh 2007, 63–79 (translated from the original in *CRAI* 1995, 49–66).

[30] Strabo 17.1.11; Dio Cassius 39.57; Porphyry, *FGrH* 260 F 2.14.

even if they had won the battle at Actium, it would all have disappeared later, just as the Ptolemaic dynasty would have been eliminated as soon as it became convenient for whoever ruled in Rome to act. The 'donations' and the empire were no more than show, a typically Ptolemaic piece of Dionysiac celebration, all possessions and games. Kleopatra and her policy were relics of the past, not a sign of the future.

# CONCLUSION

A series of wars between two polities for possession of the same territory spread over two centuries inevitably had effects both on Koile Syria and on a much wider region. The conflicts themselves were all different in larger or smaller degrees, in the territory fought over, and in the conduct of the fighting, and a major change came with the two wars of Antiochos III. Before his time the fighting had been defensive by the Ptolemies, holding on to what Ptolemy I had gained; after that they were defensive by the Seleukids, attempting to hold what Antiochos had acquired. And, of course, having mopped up the Ptolemaic holdings in Asia Minor, wars after Antiochos were actively confined to fighting in Syria and Cyprus. A second major change came with the Sixth War, by which time it had become clear that the Ptolemaic kingdom's independence was guaranteed by Rome, but that the integrity of the Seleukid kingdom was not. This was one reason why the former survived, while the latter did not.

There is another aspect, which is not so much a change in the warfare, as a factor which became revealed as the warfare intensified. It is the basic geographical and political fact that the two kingdoms were dissimilar in their sizes and constitutions, despite their almost simultaneous and similar origins as fragments of Alexander's failed empire. Egypt, the basis of Ptolemaic power to which the various overseas territories were mere adjuncts, was rich, populous, and fundamentally stable, giving to the Ptolemies from Ptolemy I to Cleopatra VII—and to the Roman emperors afterwards—a basis of wealth and power incomparably greater than anything else in the Mediterranean region (with the exception, perhaps, of a united Italy, which was politically and militarily powerful for a different reason). The Seleukid kingdom was large and diffuse, a collection of dissimilar societies, generally much less rich and productive than Egypt. It was possible, as Ptolemy II showed, to screw the lid of government ever tighter on the Egyptian peasantry, squeezing unending streams of wealth from them; this was out of the question in the sprawling Seleukid kingdom, not least because the trained manpower to administer such a system did not exist.

This difference in constitution and geography and administration meant that in wars between the two kingdoms the Seleukid state was always fragile, while the Ptolemaic always capable of great endurance.

Seleukos I understood this full well. As the Seleukid king with the best knowledge of his kingdom—he had traversed it from end to end more than once, both before ruling it, as a man of Alexander, and as conqueror, and as the only Seleukid king before Antiochos IV to have visited Egypt, he saw that Ptolemy was immovable from Koile Syria in 301 BC He could also see that his section of Syria, north of the Eleutheros River, was indefensible at the time, being only thinly populated and all-but unfortified.

This initial discrepancy Seleukos addressed in part by encouraging the re-population of northern Syria, founding the many cities there, and developing a governing system which recruited local elites to his service. He was successful enough that Babylonians and Medes remained loyal for century and a half, though the peoples of Asia Minor were less so, and Baktria not at all. But the weakness of this scheme was that it continued this basic fragility of the kingdom, for it depended above all on loyalty to the person of the king. In Egypt the position of the monarch was one of greater strength, based on the traditional Egyptian respect for the god-pharaoh, to which was added the allegiance of the Greco-Macedonian immigrants to the social system so that the king was the essential centre of their society. Added to this social structure was the bureaucratic scheme which was built on Egyptian foundations, first by Ptolemy I, and then elaborated by his son, and staffed by Greeks and Macedonians. This eventually operated largely independently of the king: that is, it continued to function whether or not the king was adult or child, sane or mad, present or absent, but always it required a king to operate for. In the Seleukid kingdom the king was essential to holding the state together, a condition which enforced regular royal movements through much of the kingdom.

When the Seleukid kingship came to be in dispute in 246 on the death of Antiochos II, the essential nature of the kingship became all-too obvious. It took only a gentle nudge from the thoroughly unmilitary Ptolemy III to bring the Seleukid kingdom to disintegration—Baktria seceded, Parthia was invaded, Asia Minor was hijacked by Hierax, the Attalids and Akhaios, and Seleukeia-in-Pieria, the dynastic heart of the kingdom, was stolen. It took over thirty years of warfare to gather the pieces together again, and even then subsidiary kingdoms (in Baktria and Parthia and in Asia Minor) had replaced provinces. This did not happen to Ptolemaic Egypt when Antiochos III at last, with great labour, conquered Koile Syria. He was able to take that province and seize all the Ptolemaic outposts in Asia Minor, but the Ptolemaic kingdom in

Egypt was fundamentally unaffected. Even Cyprus and Cyrenaica could be detached without severely affecting the kingdom, and they remained under cadet Ptolemaic rule, and were periodically reunited with Egypt.

The great irony of these wars was that the possession of Koile Syria was no more essential to Egypt's security than the control of these two large provinces. Ptolemy I took over Koile Syria as a defence for Egypt, and even when it was lost Egypt was in no immediate danger. Only Antiochos IV managed to invade the country. Neither Demetrios II nor Ptolemy IX Soter succeeded: the fortress of Pelusion was sufficient defence, though possession of Gaza would have been added insurance.

In Syria, on the other hand, the Seleukid lands were several times invaded by Ptolemaic armies—in 246, 145, 109 at least, and possibly at other times. Eventually, without Seleukid power present in Koile Syria, it was not worth Ptolemaic attention to control it—in the last war, the Ninth, one result was the effective elimination of the Seleukid presence in Palestine, so that the conquests of Ptolemy Soter and Kleopatra III could be abandoned by Ptolemy Alexander (just as he let Ptolemy Soter keep Cyprus, and as he installed Ptolemy Apion in Cyrenaica). Egypt was sufficient unto itself behind its desert defences.

As the two rival kingdoms shrank in size and power, however, another possibility emerged—the unification of the remnants into a single state. It was never more than a possibility, and was as much the result of the intermarriages of the two dynasties as of any conscious wish, but as an aspiration it was there, and it hovered over international affairs for seven decades, emerging as a policy whenever a war began. It was sufficiently alarming in 168–167 for Rome to, in effect, threaten war on Antiochos IV if he persisted in his campaign of conquest inside Egypt. As a result, the issue tended to arise only when Rome was pre-occupied elsewhere—in 145, for example, and in 128. The only king who appears to have made a serious effort to realize it was the hapless Demetrios II. He failed because of the massed special interests arranged against him and the idea, and because he tended to attempt ambitious aims without sensible political and military preparations. (Ptolemy Philometor's brief reign as 'king of Syria' was scarcely a serious political development. He was merely waiting to see which Seleukid to choose as king to follow him—but the precedent was there for anyone who cared to cite it.)

The prospect of union was never more than a faint one, though romantically one may play with the possibilities which might result from it. In actuality, what the wars did was to reinforce and strengthen the antipathy between the dynasties articulated by Ptolemy I when he seized Koile

Syria for the first time, and by Seleukos I when he remarked that Ptolemy was his friend and he would not fight him. The longer the fighting went on without the Seleukids succeeding in acquiring their 'lost' province, the more likely it was that wars would continue. Once Antiochos III had decisively succeeded, and had shown that he had no intention of attacking Egypt itself, the wars could have stopped. But by then Ptolemaic pride was involved and return matches inevitably followed.

There are two aspects of the actual fighting which bear noting. The first is that in nine wars, spread over two centuries, and with over thirty years of actual warfare, the number of battles can be counted on the fingers of one hand—Raphia, Panion, the Porphyrion pass, the Oenoparos River, perhaps Asochis. There may have been others, and there were certainly many more smaller scale encounters, such as the one recorded in the Egyptian papyrus for 169; and there were a number of sieges—Sidon, Seleukeia, Alexandria, Dor, Ptolemais, and no doubt more—but if one comes to these wars from a study of Roman warfare, the conduct of the fighting looks to be very low-key. The fighting was campaigning, not really encounter battles; the campaigns of Antiochos III are the best examples. On the other hand, when a large-scale battle did occur, it tended to be decisive for the war as a whole; no doubt the danger inherent in each encounter was a good reason for avoiding one.

The second noteworthy aspect is that the fighting and campaigning was by no means confined to 'Syria'. This point is regularly made in comments on the wars, that the whole sequence is misnamed, but the name is apt mainly because Syria was the main prize. They were wars for Syria if not always in Syria. Any fighting which took place in Asia Minor or Egypt, or Cyprus, was part of a war whose object was to conquer or retain Syria. The name is therefore precise and correct. Yet the fighting did spread, and Asia Minor in particular was the second major area of conflict. That is, in wars between two contiguous states, their mutual borders will all be areas where they fight. Nothing is surprising there.

At the same time, the fighting in Asia Minor was quite clearly subordinate to the main object of the war. The campaigns of Antiochos III again show this clearly. Once he had conquered Syria, by 198, he was able in a single summer to sweep up all the Ptolemaic outposts in Asia. That is, the Asian dimension was never primary, not even for the earlier kings. Antiochos II spent much time campaigning in Asia Minor and Thrace, but he only did so once he was effectively shut out of operating in Syria by his lifetime treaty with Ptolemy II. And one may go further: the fighting

in Asia took place only when the Seleukids were too weak to contemplate a major campaign in Syria, or in the inter-war periods of intrigue when each side attempted to gain a small advantage so as to discomfit its rival. Asia Minor was only a secondary region of conflict in default of Syria: Syria was the arena of choice.

The result of the wars, of course, was that Koile Syria eventually became Seleukid territory; the subsequent attempts by Ptolemy VI and Kleopatra III to recover it, or part of it, both failed after only brief occupations. The purpose of Ptolemy I in seizing it might therefore be seen as futile. There is no doubt that he saw it as essential to his political survival, for he had repeatedly invaded it in the two decades before 301—Seleukos I was surely not surprised to find that Ptolemy had beaten him to the punch in 301–300. What Ptolemy presumably did not expect to happen were the wars which followed. The effects these wars had on the two kingdoms has been noted repeatedly in the previous chapters. In essence the continuing conflict forced the two regimes to undertake measures to strengthen themselves internally, financially, militarily, politically, by alliances, and by recruiting manpower, so that they could face yet another war which both sides came to anticipate. This was in fact a classic 'arms-race', in which military conflict has its effect in every corner of political and economic life, in government organization, in finance and taxation, in building, in agricultural development, in manufacturing, in colonization, in cultural life. A lot of the detail is, as usual in this period, now invisible to us, though some is very clear. The most spectacular of these developments, of course, were Seleukos' city-founding, particularly in North Syria, and Ptolemy II's elaboration of the Egyptian governmental system, but these are only the most obvious symptoms.

The more unexpected results arose from those very measures, designed as they were to strengthen the rival kings in their competition. In Egypt as early as 245 there was resistance to the pressure put on the peasantry, resistance which eventually erupted into secession, particularly in the south of the country. It was this which so weakened the Ptolemaic kingdom that Antiochos III, at his second attempt, was able to conquer the disputed region successfully—but it was the need to recruit Egyptians (as opposed to Greeks) into the Ptolemaic army to defeat Antiochos' first attempt which led, directly or indirectly, to the Egyptian secession. It is not possible to document a direct link between the Egyptians in the battle at Raphia and the supporters of Herwennefer in Thebes ten years later, but that can be no doubt that there was at least a psychological connection.

These native Egyptian uprisings continued at intervals for the rest of the Ptolemaic kingdom's existence, though the policy of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II in recruiting and promoting Egyptians into the government system—personified by Paos, governor-general of the Thebaid—no doubt partly drew the sting of Egyptian opposition. (Or, if a more cynical viewpoint is preferred, Euergetes was successful in setting disaffected Egyptians against one another.) In the Seleukid kingdom native uprisings happened in a different way. Partly they were designed to detach large areas from Seleukid rule, but usually still under Greek control, as in Baktria and Asia Minor. Yet these still amounted to native rebellions, since, particularly in Baktria, the Greek ruling class was not supported by large numbers of other Greeks, and so the rulers were required to adopt Euergetes' policy of conciliating the native population much earlier; similarly in Asia Minor, where those supporting Antiochos Hierax and the Attalids and Akhaios were Greek natives of the cities particularly, and non-Greek natives were successfully incorporated. Both of these regions became independent kingdoms in opposition to the Seleukids, but in and under Greek kings, and neither lasted more than a century or so. The same reaction to Seleukid rule, but without the element of the Greek elite performing the secession surgery, can be seen in Media Atropatene, Persis, Elymais, Armenia, Kappadokia. Closer to the centre, Edessa and Kommagene slid into independence under dynasties which were partly native and partly Greek. And yet note that Babylonia and the main part of Media remained loyal until conquered, and when a Seleukid army, particularly commanded by the king, turned up, these areas swiftly accepted Seleukid rule again.

And yet, despite this, the Seleukid kingdom can only be characterized as a sprawling, semi-dysfunctional, ramshackle polity. But this was also the deliberate purpose of the kings. It was impossible to fasten a detailed bureaucratic system on such a disparate state, so the governing system took full account of this. The cities which were founded (and those already existing) were lightly governed, with due attention to local sensibilities. Native elites were conciliated and admitted to local areas of power, for example in Babylonia from the beginning. In return these semi-autonomous cities and regions were expected to be loyal, to surrender their young men for military service, and to contribute taxes—though the kings ensured that the citadels were occupied by royal forces, and those citadels had free access to the outside. And for a long time, especially in Syria and Babylonia, this was a system which worked.

Which brings us to the effect on Koile Syria of the change of masters as a result of the Fifth War, concluded in 195. This was an area which was fought over, not principally for itself, but for the access it gave to its neighbours. Koile Syria was seized by Ptolemy I as a defence for Egypt, just as he seized control of Cyrenaica and Cyprus, and just as he established naval bases in the Aegean. His northern boundary on the Eleutheros River appeared to threaten Seleukos' new province in North Syria, and Seleukos claimed to have been allocated all Syria in the distribution of the spoils in the aftermath of the defeat of Antigonos Monophthalomos, so he and his dynasty were determined eventually to take it from the Ptolemies. (Ptolemy III's campaign in North Syria demonstrated exactly why the Seleukids were so persistent.)

By the time Antiochos III had conquered the land, however, it had been under Ptolemaic control for a century and more. It was never so tightly governed and taxed as Egypt, but the Ptolemaic governing system was still very elaborate. This would seem to have been taken over intact by the Seleukids. The first governor-general after Antiochos III's conquest was Ptolemaios son of Thraseas, who had also been in the very same post under Ptolemy IV. An inscription from the 190s shows the complexity of the administrative methods, and their inefficiency.[1] It is the scheme inherited from the Ptolemaic period, for there was no need to change it. The Seleukid empire did not have a uniform system, but one which was adapted to each local case.[2]

For Koile Syria, therefore, the immediate change as a result of the transfer to Seleukid control was minimal. Yet, as the Seleukid kings changed, so did the conditions of their power in Syria as a whole. In the north Arados repeatedly made attempts to break free, its connection with the kingdom changing about every generation—in 259, 242, 227, 219, 171, and 129, and at the end it achieved the independence it had so long sought. This was eventually emulated by the other Phoenician cities in the 120s. In Judaea also there were particular local conditions which were apparently misunderstood by Antiochos IV to imply treason during his war in Egypt. This led to a rising led by the successive Maccabee brothers, which may best be compared with the ambitions of Arados and the secession of the native Egyptian pharaohs, and perhaps with the willingness of the Asia Minor cities to be separated from the kingdom. The best comparison seems to be with the Theban uprising in Egypt

1 Austin 193.

2 Sherwin-White and Kurht, *Samarkhand to Sardis*, chs 2 and 3.

in that in its origin it was directed against the king and against the Greek influence they represented, with strong religious overtones. Yet that Greek influence was extremely powerful, so that, even as it grew into an independent state, Judaea adopted the governing and administrative methods of the Hellenistic kings.

There is no reason to suppose that if Koile Syria had continued to be part of the Ptolemaic state such a rising could have been avoided. The tensions in Jewish society were deep-rooted, and rebellion against the controlling power was one way of relieving those tensions. Yet the lighter Seleukid administrative system left room for such disputation to flourish. At the same time the heavier Ptolemaic system clearly generated resentment. In Judaea, therefore, the combination of the tight Ptolemaic system and the less attentive Seleukid practices helped the explosion along. What seems incontestable is the fact that being fought over was a condition which stimulated local disaffection, and at the same time provided the opportunity to take advantage of the preoccupations of the kings. The Jewish troubles only came to Antiochos IV's attention because they became linked with the war he was waging in Egypt. Without that war he would have been, if not unconcerned, then less likely to react violently, and so he would not have provoked the rural guerrilla war which followed.

This, and other secessions, were the causes of the 'decline' of the Seleukid kingdom. Secession by native Egyptians more than defeats in war was the cause of the 'decline' in Ptolemaic power. But all these breaks for independence and rebellions and uprisings were at root the result of the need for both kingdoms to concentrate their attention on Syria. The test of this comes with the periods of peace which followed the wars. After 253, after 241, after 217, the Seleukid kings could concentrate their efforts on recovering lost cities, at putting down rebellions, even extending their rule; in Egypt after 195 the seceding pharaohs could be suppressed, and after 145 the uprisings and rebellions could be easily contained. Without the Syrian wars to occupy the attention and resources of the kingdoms the rebellions, even if they happened, would have been the more easily suppressed, and the secessions would probably never have taken place—and both kingdoms would not have been such easy prey for the Romans.

However, this was not the only cause of the kingdoms' 'decline'. As direct a cause was the conduct of the royal families. Each of them for a century managed to exercise control over their internal family disputes, with only the occasional murder. The seriousness of dynastic disputes was clearly shown by the Seleukid collapse in 246. By the time of the

generation following the deaths of Antiochos III and Ptolemy V (in 187 and 180), however, dynastic disputes became endemic in each family. The violence, waste, and distraction these caused enabled invaders and rebels to make progress in the same way that the Syrian wars took royal attention away from the need to maintain internal control.

The importance of these wars is therefore clear. They were the central diplomatic and political and military factor in international affairs in the Hellenistic world from 301 to 128, and were more important for the first century of that period than anything which happened in the Western Mediterranean. And it was the stultifying effects the wars had on the two great kingdoms which permitted outside powers—not just Rome, but Parthia as well—to penetrate into the region. The Syrian Wars were a major cause of both the power of the two dynasties, but also of their destruction.

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